

# The Health of the Mind



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by

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To  
MY WIFE



## Preface to the Second Edition

The Publishers have asked for a new edition of this book and therefore it has been produced. There were many reviews when it first appeared seven years ago, nearly all of them helpful and giving valuable criticism. It has been possible to make a number of small alterations to the text in consequence, and of course certain sections have been brought up to date.

Evidently we have not reached saturation point as regards the supply of non-technical literature on Mental Health. The greater the development of medical, scientific and technical knowledge of the subject, the wiser will be the layman's interest. The unknown and semi-mysterious has an attraction, which is not altogether healthy, for many people. The acquisition of such real knowledge as is available is a sensible pursuit for anyone and our technique of living will constantly improve by this means.

Medical Psychology has now been introduced into the curriculum for all Medical Students in this country. A real concern with the principles which govern Mental Health shows itself in most social agencies

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and in many Courts. The gradual evolutionary change of view-point that is coming about—in truly British fashion—is something in which every intelligent person wishes to share.

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## Foreword to the First Edition

(1929)

This book does not pretend to be a technical work, nor does it claim to be all inclusive or exhaustive, for most manifestly it is not so. The only justification for its production among the welter of books, scientific and popular, which have appeared lately, dealing with the mind and the modern psychological approach to mental problems, is that, as a digest of some of the recent thought along these lines, it may be of service to those for whom the fuller and more technical works have little appeal. One man's meat may suit others also.

Those who are of my own profession, if they come to read it, may find some ideas which are not altogether trite and platitudinous to them; but they will not find it in any sense a text-book of mental hygiene, or a handbook for the treatment of mental disorders. Such facts as are in it are, I believe, accurate; but in the main it is an expression of the unoriginal personal views of one who does not feel himself bound down to any particular school of thought, and all of these views are open to modification in the future, as knowledge and understanding increase. Essentially, it is an effort to meet some of the needs

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of the ordinary man, who feels that he might be more adequately informed than he is on questions concerning his mental processes and the problems of behaviour which result from them.

Life in more primitive times must have been very much simpler, and problems of conduct much easier to solve than they are to-day, though in those days there must also have been many more mysteries and puzzles for the thoughtful than in the twentieth century. As civilization has taken shape around us the difficulties have increased, and average men and women of to-day are conscious of their need for guidance in many of the ordinary problems which confront them; and this not only because there are personal problems needing solution, but because they feel that parenthood demands from them an increasing standard of knowledge. Their interests also encourage them to look for the fundamental causes of social and international maladjustments.

Many people, and they are not all of the older generation, hold the opinion that, although it may be interesting, it is unnecessary, perhaps a little *outré*, and certainly somewhat dangerous to look into one's own mind and to study its working. One may ask whether it is better to be unaware of the tangles and muddles in one's own mind, than to know something of them and try to straighten them out, but certainly the argument is admissible and their point of view is to be respected. The book is not written for these folk. Long before the days of the Old Testament there were to be found men who, by reason of their temperamental equipment, were introspective

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and often morbidly so. The percentage of the population to-day who make the same approach to life is probably no greater. Those who are the first to adduce this danger of introspection as an argument against thinking out their mental processes are usually already given to introspection, too often, however, of a pointless and unproductive kind. Had they the necessary insight, this introspection might become a valuable quality and no cause for stumbling. There are some who feel that it is a selfish procedure to spend time and effort in studying one's own personality and in thinking out the why and wherefore of one's mental reactions. Certainly it may be so if our main object is selfish interest and a desire for some special privileges for ourselves; but this charge can hardly be substantiated if our purpose is the attainment of greater fitness and efficiency, so that we may better play our rôle as members of society. The man who came back from the front-line trenches to go up in an observation balloon might have been accused of shirking, or seeking to escape the hardness of actual warfare; but, if his object was to get a better knowledge of the enemy's position and to see how better to co-ordinate his own forces for the attack when he returned, it was certainly worth while. This is the object one should have in taking up the study of one's mental health.

It would be interesting to know the motives which lie behind the reading of this book. By some it will be read for critical purposes, or out of professional interest. Some will read it to please their friends. Others for the most sensible reason—that they hope

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it will teach them something, and above all give them food for thought and so, by that stimulation, be of some lasting benefit. But there is another group about whom I have some fears—those who hope to find in it some ready-made solution for their difficulties, for they will be disappointed. We all have a persistent streak of the childish belief in magic, whether it shows itself in expecting miraculously material answers to our prayers, or in hoping for a formula which will clear up all our perplexities. There are no panaceas in medicine nor in philosophy. Modern psychology is no conjuring trick, and this is not a book from which anyone will ‘cure’ himself. There is no way into the seventh heaven of knowledge and insight, though clearer thinking can always take us a little further on a road that is worth travelling. It is more than doubtful whether by reading this anyone will ‘increase his earning capacity’ or his ‘will-power’, as these are understood by those who are so desperately concerned about them.

Those, however, who are healthily discontented with themselves will find some ‘grains of truth among the chaff’. Their impulses to greater mental freedom and increased social usefulness will at any rate be encouraged. The advice, so often and so cheaply given, to ‘pull oneself together’ may sound very well, but it is usually impossible, because those to whom it is given have no idea at all as to what there is for them to get hold of before they pull. Their efforts to be strong and silent are so often futile because that attitude only conceals an uninformed fear.

There is a very usual tendency among those who

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read books of this type to look through the list of contents, and then to miss out any chapters which sound as though they were less interesting than others. The earlier chapters of this book attempt to give a brief outline of the anatomical and physiological background of our mental life. They are not at all burdensome in their detail, since anyone who wants to know more can find the information easily in technical books dealing with the subjects involved. Such knowledge must however be the foundation on which we build any study of personality, however far away from mere material facts some of our theories may seem to take us. These chapters should therefore be read. A word of advice may also be given on the matter of case illustrations which are quoted here, as in all similar books. Often it is the easiest way to make some point clear; but there is a danger that the reader may see himself there, or try to fit the example to his own case. He will rarely get help in that way and will be sometimes badly puzzled. We are, after all, each of us unique and no one of us is exactly like any other. The illustration is only of value in helping us to get a method of approach and in making clearer certain specific mechanisms.

## *Chapter I*

# Mental Health

Whatever one may believe about the historical accuracy of the story of man's fall in the Garden of Eden, there can be no doubt of its symbolic truth; for presumably since man came into being there has ever been a struggle for spiritual, mental and physical health. In various ways we fall short of perfection—the goal towards which humanity strives and has always striven. Disease, faulty adjustment, or malfunctioning of our various mechanisms, has made itself obvious and come between us and that Utopia which we regard as our right. Although physical and mental health are intimately related and march hand in hand, this interdependence has not always been recognized, and the greater emphasis has usually been laid upon the importance of our bodily states, sometimes to the complete exclusion of our mental processes.

From the days of the earliest records, however, there is evidence that mental unfitness or abnormality was present and was observed. The historical books of the Old Testament abound in instances of eccentricities and peculiarities of conduct and feeling,

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which to-day we should regard as some form of neurosis. There are also not a few cases of definite insanity on record, notably that of Nebuchadnezzar, who became delirious and ate grass 'like an ox'; and of Saul, who had recurring (cyclic) attacks of depression. The effort of David to distract Saul during these attacks is one of the few records of any attempt at treatment, although Joseph's use of Pharaoh's dreams would suggest that such methods of attempting a solution of mental problems were then in use, though to us they seem strangely modern. In classical writings there are many references to mental disorder, mostly of the more serious type, and the treatments which were employed were generally of a primitive nature, flogging, chains, fetters, and starvation with bleeding being the methods most often used. A few writers suggested more rational schemes of treatment along the lines of what would to-day be called occupational therapy. Epileptic phenomena seem always to have been regarded as apart from other mental troubles; they were looked upon as sacred, and in consequence the sufferers received special treatment. The Greeks had temples of healing where mystic rites were performed, and this may be the historical beginning of the close association of religion with the treatment of mental disorders. In the Middle Ages we find that those who were mentally afflicted in the grosser ways were often handed over to the priests for treatment. Such wise and advanced ideas as the Greeks had expressed in the way of therapeutic measures seem to have been lost sight of, and the treatment of those who were actually insane retro-

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gressed rather than advanced, so that right up to the latter part of the eighteenth century barbarous inhumanities were the lot of these sufferers, even in countries like England and Germany. In less civilized countries insanity is still treated as though it were a crime, and sufferers from it as though they were less than human. Under Turkish rule in Palestine insane persons were kept chained, so recently as 1914. These wretched creatures were confined in a monastery, and the only attempt at treating their malady was the installation of a telephone wire, which ran from their place of confinement to the chapel, so that the prayers might help them!

France and England led the way towards modern and less inhuman treatment of mental disorders. At the end of the eighteenth century, members of the Society of Friends began a movement which resulted in the foundation of the Retreat at York, a mental hospital which has always been in the forefront of modern advances in treatment. At this same time reforms of many kinds were begun, and slowly and painfully there was evolved the relatively humane attitude towards the mentally sick, which we have to-day. The idea that insanity was an illness comparable to physical disorders, and due to some unknown, but physiological cause, began to take shape in medical minds during the early part of the nineteenth century; and it was not till the end of that century that people began to realize further that even Physiology and bodily conditions could not explain everything. Men, therefore, began to turn to Psychology, the science of mind, to help



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them to understand the mental phenomena with which they were confronted. The history of the evolution of the modern treatment of the insane is distressing, but it is very interesting, and its study will repay any reader who cares to delve into it.

With the advent of the twentieth century much has been accomplished in the way of better understanding and better treatment of insanity. Learning, as we always do, from the study of graver diseases, we have moreover come to understand much about the wider group of disorders of mind which had hardly been recognized until this century.

The Mental Treatment Act passed in 1930 in England is the latest advance in the care of the insane. It made provision for the poor in rate-aided mental hospitals to be there as voluntary patients; it made provision for temporary certification for certain cases and it authorized the establishment in every area of Out-Patient clinics for the early treatment of mental illness. Increasingly this Act will bear fruit and be of real service to the people of this country.

It must not be thought that in speaking of the health of the mind, we are only, or even mainly, concerned with problems of insanity. Mental health is a concern of every human being, and enters into every ordinary relationship between individuals, and into every phase of human conduct. Although in most men's minds there has in the past been a great gulf between physical and mental disorders—between the general hospital and the mental hospital—there is in fact no such distinction; and similarly there is

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no clear line of division between the everyday abnormalities of thought and conduct and states of insanity. The established insanities are usually far removed from normal mental functioning, but the borderland between the two is broad. The mental disorders of the less marked type, which are dependent upon failure to adjust to life, are called the 'psychoneuroses'; while the established insanities, in which the patient, as a rule, fails to recognize his own difficulties or peculiarities of idea or behaviour, are called the 'psychoses'. Only in a few cases do the former conditions seem to pass over into the latter group, and it is quite likely that in such cases there has been a failure in correct diagnosis. The psychoneurotic symptoms may have been masking a psychosis all the time, and there may be, for all we yet know, a constitutional difference between these two groups of disorder.

It may well be asked whether there is such a thing as a normal person. We all live in veritable glass houses, and can, if we only knew it, ill afford to throw stones at our neighbours. There are none of us who have not mental idiosyncrasies and peculiarities, often hidden at great pains even from ourselves, and these must of necessity influence our outlook on life, and our power of adaptation to it. Why should we be, as we usually are, so much afraid of madness? If we lose our temper it is because we are carried away by our feelings, usually our sense of injured self-importance, and, being thus carried away, we are, for the moment, of unsound mind. The man who is sane is he who is in successful com-

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mand of his own ship. Standing on the bridge, he controls all the different sections of the crew, the engineers—his instinctive driving forces, the deck hands—his executive abilities, the stewards—his capacity for social adjustment, and the navigating officers—his intellectual and purposive side. A mutiny in any one of these departments, or a lack of coordination between them, means maladjustment, and, if acute, insanity.

There is to-day a growing realization that if sound principles of mental hygiene are followed in the early life of the child, and continued by wiser education and clearer thinking, much serious mental breakdown might be avoided, and we men and women would come some way nearer to that state of balance and mental efficiency to which we all aspire. The child has, from the first, a belief in magic, for in its immature and inexperienced mind cause and effect are imperfectly related until, as memory develops, it accumulates experience which influences its generalizations about life. In infancy the routine of its little life goes on steadily, or may be upset by many factors; but all this is taken for granted. Questions as to the cause and the mechanism do not begin to suggest themselves to the childish mind until about the third year of life; and the child's questions are met too often with evasive replies, of such a type as to reinforce the earlier idea that there is, in reality, much magic and mystery in the world around. There certainly is much in our environment that is mysterious because unexplored and unknown, but the idea of magic is only the creation of our ignorance.

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Primitive peoples, like children, understanding nothing of the natural laws of the physical or mental world, have always had recourse to the conception of magic. Natural phenomena, the cyclones which destroy, the fire that burns, and the disease which kills must in ignorance be ascribed to evil spirits; and so there will naturally follow the sense of fear, acts of sacrifice and propitiation, and a mass of superstitious rites. Superstitions still persist in minds that should have grown far beyond them, and in some particulars modern civilized men are not very far removed from Central Africa. Moreover in practically everyone there are to be found traces of the primitive phase through which they passed in childhood, showing themselves in a lingering tendency to a sense of guilt, and the habit of propitiatory or expiatory actions.

In the physical world we are constantly making discoveries. Wireless telephony would have been magic even fifty years ago, and yet here we have only found out and made use of natural laws that were before unrealized. In the mental sphere discovery has been more backward, and ideas of magic more dominant in consequence. Academic and laboratory psychologists have for long made a study of conscious mind; the operation of instincts and emotions has been watched in experiments with human beings and animals; and by trained introspection a mass of important observations and deductions has been accumulated. It was not, however, until the end of the last century that any very serious contributions were made, from the psychological

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angle, to the understanding and treatment of conduct abnormalities and mental disorder. Modern psychology regards these phenomena as explicable in terms of mind and function, instead of their having to be thought of in terms of disordered structure, which constitutes the physiological approach. Both standpoints are of course needed. True theories can only be arrived at along either line by the accepted method of research, namely, the collection of facts which must be checked and proved, and the arrangement of these facts into sequences from which conclusions can be drawn. French psychologists were first in this field, but the most fundamental work of discovery has been done by Sigmund Freud of Vienna, whose work has stimulated most modern research in the fields of medical psychology and psychopathology. Following the methods of another physician, Breuer, in treating patients of a neurotic type by getting them to talk and recall painful episodes of their earlier life, Freud found that the process reached with some patients to a very much deeper level of consciousness. The investigation and study of these earlier memories and more primitive states of mental activity resulted in setting his patients free from many of the thought and action patterns into which they had been forced, and, by a redistribution of their mental energies, brought about cure of a more complete kind than any that he had hitherto obtained. This book does not attempt to deal with the Freudian discoveries or theory. These are set out at length by many writers, to a few of whom there are references in the

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bibliography; and the attempt to compress or summarize the theories of any school of psychology has usually been unsatisfactory and unfair. Moreover the attempt of this book—to be of practical help to the ordinary man—would not be greatly furthered by so doing. It is, however, important that the reader should understand that Freud originated the technique of this sort of mental investigation, which he called Psycho-Analysis. He and his co-workers and followers have produced a mass of material, from which have come many established facts and theories, and these have, more than anything else, contributed to our understanding of mental life and conduct. His work still goes on and, as in all honest efforts to find truth, in the course of time the unsound part of his theories is being recognized and modified.

Jung of Zurich, who worked for a time with Freud, broke away from him and started a school of Analytical Psychology of his own. His theory tends to be much more philosophic than that of Freud. There is less determinism, and consequently less emphasis on reductive analysis, i.e. a process of analysis which aims at the tracing backwards of every tendency to its source. Jung is more concerned with the present-day psychology of his patients, and is not afraid to help them by teaching or other methods.

The third school of modern psychology which stands out under a definite name is that of Individual Psychology, so called by Alfred Adler of Vienna when he parted from Freud. Freud has always seen the sex instinct as the primary factor behind human

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conduct, though very often he used the word sex in a much wider sense than the man in the street would understand. Adler has taken as his formula 'the will to power', and upon this he has based his theories, being more interested in the goal towards which men are striving, than in their antecedent muddles.

Though they are of less importance to the general student, we should also just mention two other schools of psychological thought—the Gestalt Psychology of Germany and the Behaviourist theories emanating from America. McDougall has recently referred to the 'British School' of Psychology, amongst the membership of which he numbers many of the medical psychologists who are eclectic and disinclined to commit themselves specifically to any of the main schools of thought.

It would seem to the detached observer that all the three main schools of thought approach the truth. The Freudian theory is the most scientific and carefully worked out, but the others also contain many valuable discoveries. In all modern psychology the fundamental difference from previous psychological theory lies in the acceptance of the idea of the unconscious mind. The conscious mind of which we make use all our waking hours needs no apologia to vouch for its existence. I am using mine as I write, and my readers are using theirs as they read. We may, however, be aware that at the back of our minds there are other ideas or wishes indefinitely expressed, which we may be able to apprehend, if we suddenly turn our attention to them, while,

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again, they may elude us for the time being, or indeed permanently. A memory away back in the past, pleasant or painful, may be brought back to the field of our consciousness by something we read or see. A stage play with the fashions of thirty years ago may have this effect, and everyone can give a score of similar instances for themselves. Where have these memories been stored? Is it that a particular type of reaction of our brain cells has been reproduced, or is the memory retained in a part of our minds which is not normally conscious? We really do not know. We often say of our friends, when they do certain things, that they are 'unconscious' of their real motive in so doing, and, indeed, in ordinary life we recognize constantly the operation of factors outside conscious deliberate control.

Our mind is like an iceberg of which only one small part (the conscious) is above the surface of the water. Below the level of consciousness are many—in fact most—of our memories. Apt associations will revive the memory of these forgotten happenings. The modern conception of the unconscious mind, however, is concerned rather more specifically with unconscious *motives*. Memories with attached emotion of various kinds are repressed, or pushed down out of consciousness, because the individual finds it hard to reconcile these feelings and wishes with his standards of life. This hypothesis of the unconscious mind, which is used to explain so much, is therefore of something which is dynamic by reason of these repressed desires. Its influence upon our conscious mental life and our conduct is enormous, for, in



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the working of our minds, thinking is quite often secondary in importance to feeling. From this region come our dreams, for they are our unconscious thoughts and wishes disguised in the language of parable or symbolism, a more primitive form of mental activity to which we revert, when our more highly organized thinking is for the moment out of use. Some have suggested that we dream so that we shall not be disturbed and kept awake by concrete thinking in its waking form. The better the contact we can make with unconscious mental processes in ourselves, and the more knowledge we can glean of them, the greater our chance of keeping our balance and being effective in the conduct of life. The more unaware and unconscious we are, the more liable we become to maladjustments or ultimate breakdown.

Some few academic psychologists, and some physiologists, regard the whole idea of the unconscious mind as an unwarranted assumption, and would have us still hold to the objective view of mind as existing only in consciousness. Not even the phenomena of mental dissociation, and of post-hypnotic states seem to convince them. But the great majority of workers along these lines give assent to-day to the theory as at any rate a good working hypothesis, which gives us the power to understand mental processes and human conduct, in a way which nothing else can do.

Psycho-Analysis is a term which was coined by Freud to describe his own particular method and theory; and to avoid confusion in our minds, it

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should be reserved for that, and that alone. Psychotherapy is a wider term which includes all methods of treatment by mental means, persuasion, suggestion, superficial analysis, re-education, or deep mental analysis. These methods of treatment are applicable, with varying degree of usefulness, to the psychoneuroses and even to a few of the mild psychoses; and, as in other branches of scientific work, the study of abnormal processes has made available a fund of knowledge which, applied to more normal persons, helps us to understand much that would otherwise be inexplicable in our mental life and everyday phases of human conduct. The obvious place for psychological understanding is the nursery; for, if the early environment and contacts of children were ideal, there would be little chance of later maladjustments to life. All medical thought must lead in the direction of the prevention of disease; and psychological medicine, while it has great value for therapeutic purposes, has an almost more important function in the obviation of mental troubles.

It is good to realize that we have an increasing insight into this group of illnesses. It is also satisfactory to know that with every addition to our knowledge and experience the work of cure is facilitated and made more certain. For those who have a sufficiency of money the obtaining of treatment presents no difficulties. This has been true for the last twenty years or more. Outside London it is, however, very difficult indeed for those who are impecunious to get adequate psychotherapy, assuming that their own

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doctors think it necessary. In London there are several clinics for adult patients, a certain number of special out-patient departments and a number of children's clinics, yet even in London the demand for such specialized help is by no means met. With the gradual recognition by the medical profession and by the intelligent laity of the need for treatment facilities, there is no doubt that this situation throughout the country will continue to improve.

. The National Council for Mental Hygiene, the Child Guidance Council and the Home & School Council are all of them educational and propaganda bodies which are doing good in making known the possibilities of wiser work for mental health, and in stimulating interest in every branch of the subject. Propaganda is always dangerous because it is manifestly possible to lead people to believe that you are offering something more than can in fact be provided. At the same time, without sensible propaganda and lay education there would be a poor chance of getting an improved state of affairs in the future.

There is an almost limitless scope for enlightened work along these lines. Individually and collectively we suffer to an extent which few appreciate, because of ignorance of the ordinary principles of mental hygiene, and few subjects are more worthy of our interest and study.

## *Chapter II*

# Bodily Mechanisms

IN the last chapter there has been an attempt to survey the field of operations of Mental Hygiene, in which it is clear that the main emphasis is to be laid upon the psychological processes that are concerned. In a later chapter the interaction of the psychological and the physical will be dealt with at greater length, but the purpose of this chapter is to provide the reader with some slight background of knowledge of the organic mechanisms and physical constitution of the organism. The widespread use of the word 'nerves' to describe conditions of emotional instability or faulty adjustment to life is an indication that we tend to look for objective rather than subjective explanations of such phenomena. It is easier to conceive of disordered bodily function resulting from a structural change than to visualize it happening as the result of a quite intangible mental process. Moreover, we are not taught to study our minds, but we are encouraged in a variety of ways to observe the workings of our bodies. From childhood onwards we are brought into contact with physical phenomena through our minor ailments, the knocks and bruises,

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the sprained ankles we achieve, the temperatures we register, or the abdominal pain that results from our unwise dietaries. It is little to be wondered at, therefore, that our thinking in later life should have an objective or materialistic trend. Many people have tried to explain all the phenomena of mind in physiological terms, but this has never been convincing or successful. There is, however, little doubt that, as our knowledge increases, we shall find more and more a correlation of brain and mind. It is very necessary that, as we begin to think of mental processes, we should have some foundation of anatomical and physiological knowledge of the human organism as a whole. Mind can only express itself through physical processes, which in themselves are dependent upon mind to a very large extent.

This is not the place for an anatomical treatise, but rather for a synopsis or resumé of what the majority of people already know. Biological or physiological teaching at school, reading, or courses of lectures which most people attend at some time in their lives, provide a necessary and interesting degree of knowledge as to the bodily functions. Some people appear to be frightened of acquiring such information, and others consider it hardly decent that they should be aware of the content or composition of their bodies, with the result that there is hardly a course of ambulance lectures, in which pictures of the human skeleton are displayed, that does not produce emotional disturbances and consequent fainting in some members of the audience. Whether this is due to inefficient teaching in early life, or to mistaken ideas

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acquired later on, it is equally an unsatisfactory state of affairs, and one that should be remedied. We cannot afford to be in complete ignorance of the essential processes upon which life depends.

The brain, and the nervous system as a whole, is the part of the physical mechanism with which we are most concerned in this book, because it is evident that mental functioning is more closely connected with the working of the brain and the nervous system than with any other part of the body. At the same time all the other physical systems are important, because they are all vital to life; and, as we shall find, they are constantly related in function to each other. There will be vicious circles in disease, in which these physical systems react upon mental functioning which, in its turn, is expressed through their activity.

The vital systems of the body are usually classified as six in number:

1. The Digestive System which is concerned with the taking in of food supplies, that have to be suitably dealt with by the body in order to act as fuel for maintaining the various services of the physical economy.

2. The Excretory System, which is responsible for the elimination and disposal of the waste products of the organism. Just as, to produce the gas which burns in our fires, coal must be brought to the gas-works, and there will be waste products produced in the process of manufacture, which have to be collected and disposed of, so will there be by-products in the process of combustion in our tissues. Some of them can be used, but others will be valueless.

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3. The Circulatory System, the mechanism which is concerned with the blood supply of the whole body.

4. The Respiratory, or Breathing System, which controls the intaking of oxygen from the air to the body, and the elimination of certain waste products from the blood through the lungs.

5. The Reproductive System, which is concerned primarily with the propagation of the species, but which also has other, indirect, functions of considerable importance.

6. The Nervous System, which is the main centre of control for all the bodily processes, includes the functions of the special sense organs, that is the mechanisms of sight, hearing, smell, etc., and is the seat of the mind.

These then are the six vital systems, all closely interrelated, all of them essential for the continuance of organized life. The machinery responsible for the maintenance of this service is contained in the body, a complicated structure of bones and muscles which is comparable to a house. The bony skeleton bears a real analogy to the arrangement of steel girders, which support the structure of the modern block of flats. The skull contains and protects the brain. The backbone, or vertebral column, which man shares with the rest of the vertebrate class of the animal kingdom, is the main support of the trunk, and from this upright there go out the supporting girders—the ribs—enclosing the vital organs of the body. Each section of the skeleton is designed and modified for the performance of certain specific

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functions, and in its development there can be traced the various stages of man's progress and evolution from lower forms of life. There are many survivals from the days when our four limbs were used for progress. The antrum or bony cavity in the face can drain away its contents quite well if we are running about on all fours; but in the erect posture which man has assumed it unfortunately cannot drain, and this sometimes gives rise to unpleasant consequences when the antrum has become infected as the result of a cold in the head. There are joints in the body which are not designed for the erect posture, and trouble may sometimes result from the strains we put upon them. The appendix would appear to have no useful function to serve in man, though it certainly is of value in lower members of the vertebrate order who eat grass (e.g. the rabbit). The human embryo in its early stages, passes through many of these earlier stages of development, and the study of embryology is full of interest, and must impress the student with the marvellous and complicated way in which our bodily mechanism has evolved. The extraordinarily intricate arrangement of our anatomical being, and of the physiological functions which maintain it, should fill us not only with wonder, but with a respect for our own bodies, and for the design that lies behind the physical and mental components of the human personality.

The development of the brain is very characteristic of all the other evolutionary processes which have gone on in the body.

It will be seen from the diagram that the brain



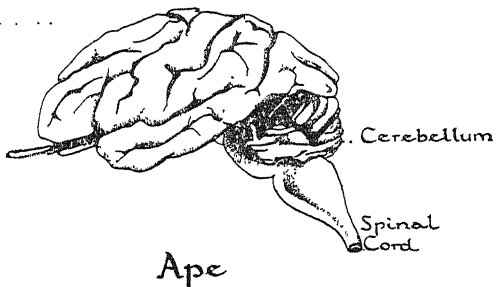
Cerebrum



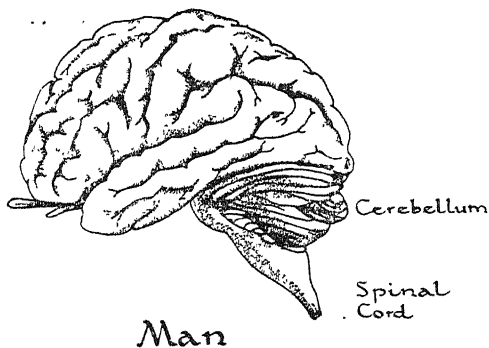
Cerebrum



Cerebrum . . .



Cerebrum . . .



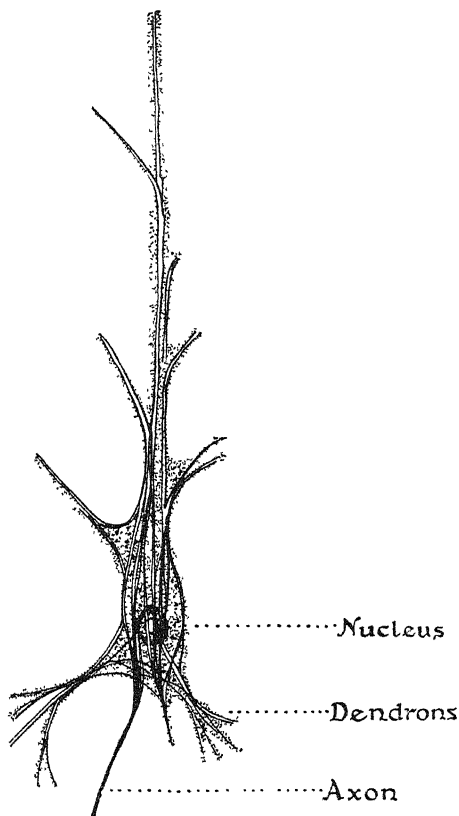
*A comparison of brain structure and formation*

## Bodily Mechanisms

has become increasingly specialized in the course of evolution. As the ability to think and take an ordered view of life has increased, there has come into being a more complicated and organized mechanism for controlling these processes, so that the human brain is by far the most complicated of any. The Nervous System, of which the brain is a part, is the apparatus whereby man orientates himself in space, that is, controls his relationship to other objects; by which he adjusts himself to changes in his physical environment, and registers the quality of his reactions, emotional and otherwise, to the various stimuli which impinge upon his being from all sides. The brain is the centre of the whole complicated system, the telephone exchange which receives messages from all over the body, and transmits orders of all kinds to the different organs. It has three main parts, the *Cerebrum*, the *Medulla* and the *Cerebellum*. It is impossible to say that one part of the brain is more important than any other, because each has its own function, but the *Cerebrum* is perhaps most intimately concerned with the mind. Intellectual functions are localized here, and the specific activities, movements of limbs, speech, hearing, etc., are controlled from the *Cerebrum*. The *Medulla* is concerned mostly with the regulation of the vital functions, such as respiration and control of the body heat, and similar processes. The *Cerebellum* (or little brain) which, in man, lies at the back of the head and is overshadowed by the *Cerebrum*, is concerned mainly with balancing and orientation in space. The fish has much greater need for these functions than man,

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and in consequence there is much less discrepancy in size between the Cerebellum and the Cerebrum. In man, the intellectual functions have achieved priority, and the very complicated Cerebrum is in



*Diagram of a microscopic nerve cell (greatly magnified).*

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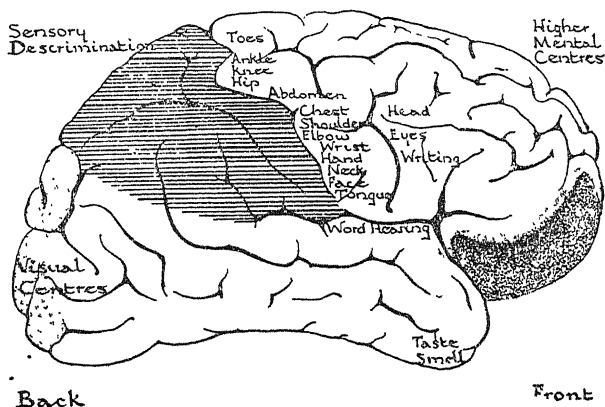
marked distinction to the relatively insignificant Cerebellum.

The Spinal Cord is the continuation of the brain which passes downwards inside the bony vertebral column. Nerves go out from it to the limbs and trunk and the various organs, and other nerves come in, so that it may be regarded as the main cable, which collects or distributes the various incoming and outgoing wires of the telephone system. The brain substance, as indeed that of the whole nervous system, consists of nerve cells or *neurons*, which are microscopic bodies consisting of a central nucleus, surrounded by what is called cell plasma, and traversed by numerous fibrillary structures. The *dendrons* are the fine filaments which branch out from these cells. The *axon* is the name given to the main filament which constitutes the telephone wire; it is along this that the specific impulse from each nerve cell travels. When many of these individual axons are bound together they form a *nerve*.

The nerve cell may initiate impulses, or it may act as a 'shunt' for impulses or messages, which it receives from any quarter, and then transmits in some further direction. There are specialized types of nerve fibres. Some of them bring impulses of a sensory nature, which have arisen in the sensory organs of the body, touch, taste, pain, heat or cold, to the brain; others convey outgoing impulses from the brain to the rest of the body. These will produce motor activity in the organism. One sees a black-beetle on the floor of the kitchen; a message is sent from the eyes to the brain, conveying the information;

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with appropriate emotion an impulse originates in the brain, and is conveyed along the outgoing fibres, which sets up muscular activity designed to move one's body and limbs into such a position that the beetle shall be crushed; so that the simple process of stamping on the beetle is, in reality, quite a complicated mechanism. In another person the same stimulus may produce a different emotion and response. The whole process takes place in an extremely short space of time, but can only take place by this method. It is known, as the result of accidental



*Diagram showing the position of some of the special areas in the Cerebrum.*

or experimental cutting of the ingoing sensory nerve fibres, that if they are absent the message will not get there, and the beetle will remain unscathed; or let us say, if the sensory nerve fibres are cut, it is possible to stick a pin into a man's finger without his taking any action. Disease or injury of the spinal

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cord may result in loss of sensation, or paralysis of the body below the point of injury. This is the result of the cutting of the connecting nerve fibres; messages cannot get through because of the blockage on the wire.

The human Cerebrum consists of a very complicated arrangement of nerve cells, which is always constant. As the result of experiment and observation of cases of head injury, particularly in warfare, the localization of various activities has been determined. The diagram on page 41 gives a rough idea of the arrangement of the different centres from which the various functions are controlled. The grey matter, near the surface of the brain, which consists of nerve cells, is a good deal thicker in the human brain than in the ape, and it varies a good deal in human beings. As the result of certain diseases, there tends to be a shrinkage and lessening in the thickness of the grey matter of the brain, and with this there is a corresponding deterioration in the mentality of the individual. This leads to a condition of Dementia, as it is called, in which the mind loses its former power of gripping a problem, and all the mental processes seem to be clouded. The term Amentia means the absence of mind which results from congenital causes. Some people are born with a diminished quantity of grey matter in the Cerebrum. Idiocy and imbecility result from this unfortunate state of affairs, and are, of course, irremediable.

There are certain types of bodily activity which can take place independently of the brain, and reflex action, as it is called, provides what is perhaps the

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simplest illustration of co-ordination of impulses through nerve cells. A sensation of pain may be registered, say, in one's finger, as the result of touching something hot. That message passes up to the spinal cord where, through the nerve cells, a fresh impulse is sent on one of the outgoing fibres, which produces the necessary motor impulse that results in the removal of the finger from the hot place. This is an example of the simplest form of reflex activity, and by this means a considerable amount of nervous energy is economized. A great many of one's reflex or automatic actions are performed in this way, without one having to exercise any conscious mental control. This reflex action can more or less be checked at will because, in its origin, it was primarily volitional and dictated by the instinct of self-preservation. It would seem to be as the result of practice and repetition, that the control of the activity has been delegated from the cerebral to the spinal centre. The late Professor Pavlov recently did much experimental work on what he called 'conditioned reflexes', and using this terminology, the reflex action which has just been described would be called *unconditioned*. It depends for its performance solely on the possession of the necessary components, the incoming nerve, the nerve cell in the spinal cord, and the outgoing nerves. Conditioned reflexes are dependent for their working on the presence of the cerebral cortex, they disappear if the cortex is put out of action. A stimulus which, under ordinary circumstances, may not evoke even the slightest reflex action may, if applied several times in succession during the occurrence of

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an unconditioned reflex, acquire a special value; so that it may ultimately become a necessary factor in the evoking of that reflex. This sounds complicated but can best be understood by an illustration. Normally, the smell of appetizing food produces a reflex flow of saliva in the mouth. If the smell of camphor, or perhaps a bright light, is for some time associated with the feeding process in an animal, either of these conditions may ultimately call forth a flow of saliva, quite apart from the stimulus of food. Human beings, who are used to clean table linen and silver, will often find that in themselves these are sufficient to start that flow of digestive juices which 'sharpen' the appetite. The reflex activity is conditioned because the process is dependent upon cells in the cerebral cortex. This work upon conditioned reflexes opens up a big field of thought, and it is a permissible speculation that, ultimately, we shall be able to find some links here between psychological and physical processes.

We have up to now been speaking of the Central Nervous System which comprises the brain, the spinal cord and the communicating nerves. It is concerned primarily with intellectual functioning and with the motor activities of the body. There is another division of the nervous system which we must mention, which is called the Vegetative Nervous System, and is concerned with the maintenance of the life of the organism. Unlike the Central Nervous System its activities are not under voluntary control. It is responsible for the nerve supply of those organs concerned with the vital bodily functions, the heart,



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lungs, digestive organs, etc. It is, so to speak, a parallel system, and sends numerous connecting branches to link it up with the Central Nervous System, and with certain vital centres which are situated in the medulla at the base of the brain. The Vegetative System has an important relationship to the endocrine or ductless glands, which will be described later, and is profoundly influenced by the emotional states and reactions of the individual. The somewhat complicated anatomy of the Vegetative Nervous System is beyond the scope of this book, but it consists of two main parts, the Sympathetic and the Parasympathetic. These two are mutually antagonistic in action, and one of them will increase, while the other reduces, the activity of the particular organ supplied. Under normal conditions these two forces are in balance; but, under emotional stimulus or as the result of disease, one or other may predominate. Some writers have gone so far as to describe definite types of individuals corresponding to the predominance of the Sympathetic or the Parasympathetic function. The former is described as lively and excitable, with rapid heart, bright eyes, dilated pupils, rosy colour and a warm dry skin. The latter is reserved and cold-blooded, with contracted pupils, deep-set eyes and a pale skin which sweats easily. For our purpose, however, it is only necessary to recognize that there is a part of the nervous system, beyond our conscious control, through which the emotions that we experience bring about physical results in the body.

There are in the body a number of glandular

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structures which produce what is called an internal secretion. Some part of the substances they have formed may be discharged into the digestive tract or elsewhere, though often there is no external secretion of this sort. They have all, however, the power of transmitting their products direct into the blood stream, and these products have a specific effect upon the bodily welfare. They have been called ductless, or endocrine glands, and as yet we know comparatively little about some of them, although a good deal of research has been made into their function. These endocrine glands are intimately connected with, and much influenced by, the Vegetative Nervous System. In their function they appear to balance each other, in somewhat the same way as the Sympathetic and Parasympathetic Systems. To some extent they provide a link between the psychological and physical processes; for on the one hand they are related to the process of metabolism and growth, and on the other they are concerned with the external relationships of the individual, since many of the emotional reactions that we experience are dependent upon the correct working of certain of the glands. The effects of the endocrine glands are produced partly by direct action on the Vegetative and Central Nervous Systems, and partly through chemical processes in the blood.

The Thymus gland, which lies somewhat above the heart, plays a considerable part before birth, and in the first few months of life in regulating bodily growth, and it should gradually disappear as the child grows up. It seems to be related to the develop-

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ing sex glands because, as they come into operation, they take over a considerable part of its activity. A general weakness of bones and muscles seems to be one of the results of a lack of secretion from the Thymus in early life, whereas 'status lymphaticus', a serious condition in which the individual is over-sensitive to certain strains, such as that produced by the administration of anæsthetics, results from the persistence of the gland after it should have disappeared.

The Pituitary gland lies at the base of the brain, lodging in a special bony cavity. Originally, it used to have a duct which carried the secretion into the naso-pharynx behind the nose. It is concerned with growth both of the skeleton and of the muscles, and also with the general economy of the body. Excess of pituitary secretion produces the condition known as 'acromegaly', in which the bones, particularly of the face and hands, are overgrown. There are many other functions of the pituitary gland. Over-development of the anterior part of the gland may, at times, be associated with an undisciplined intellectual activity, which leads to delinquency and other conduct difficulties. It is also thought to be associated with the development of the essential masculine characteristics, and its overgrowth may possibly explain some of the phenomena of masculine characteristics in women.

The Thyroid gland has some resemblance to the Pituitary gland in its function, for it is largely concerned with questions of growth and the provision of energy for the bodily machine. The gland lies in

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the neck, and when unduly enlarged forms what is called a goitre, which will be familiar to most readers. More is known about the mode of operation and function of the Thyroid gland because it is possible to administer it very satisfactorily, since its duct originally used to open into the alimentary canal, and consequently preparations of Thyroid Extract can be given by mouth and thus absorbed. Where the Thyroid is overactive there tends to be an excitable condition, in which all the processes of the body, both physical and mental, seem to be speeded up. There will be emotional instability, with a rapid pulse, fine muscular tremors and a moist skin. Deficiency of secretion leads to a retarded development on both the physical and mental side. Deficiency may be absolute, since some children are apparently born without any Thyroid gland; or it may be produced as the result of some illness, which interferes with the working of the gland and may only be temporary in character. The Parathyroid glands are small bodies closely associated with the Thyroid; they seem to be essential to life and control some of the more complicated chemical constituents of the blood supply. Their removal brings about a condition of muscular spasm in the body.

There is no clearer instance of the interrelation of emotion with the physical processes than is presented by the function of the Suprarenal glands, so called because they lie just above the kidneys on either side of the body. A typical reaction to fear, of which more will be said in a later chapter, is brought about through the secretion of these glands.

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This secretion acts by producing an increased pulse rate, heightened blood pressure and an augmented muscular tone, which prepares the whole of the individual for immediate action.

The Gonads, or sex glands, vary slightly in the two sexes. They have, of course, their external secretion, which is vital for the propagation of the species. The internal secretion also performs a most essential function. The development of these glands at puberty brings about the secondary sexual characteristics, physical and mental, which constitute a large part of one's growing-up; and alterations in the activity of these glands produce marked results, to which reference will be found later in the book.

The chief concern of this book is with mental functioning, and it is evident therefore that the Nervous System, to which most of this chapter is devoted, should take the principal place in that physiological background which we are seeking to acquire. The other vital systems, however, deserve a passing mention for there is an inter-relationship between them all, which cannot be ignored. Not only does any failure on their part gradually produce general and mental changes, but emotional reactions have their corresponding effects upon each of these systems. All of these vital systems are partly under the conscious control of the Central Nervous System, and partly regulated unconsciously through the Vegetative System. It is of course through this latter mechanism that mental causes may produce those physical changes, which are often so puzzling to the layman.

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The Digestive System consists primarily of a hollow tube extending from the mouth to the anus. It is divided up into various parts to which separate names are given, mouth, pharynx, oesophagus or gullet, and stomach, followed up by the thirty-two feet of intestine, which again has a number of different names, according to its size, shape or function. The whole system is concerned with the taking in of food, which has to be broken down and changed chemically; and for this purpose there are digestive glands, distributed throughout the length of the alimentary canal, and elaborate arrangements for the mixing of these secretions with the food, and for passing the food onwards down the canal. In the process there is a certain resemblance to the moving band employed in a modern automobile factory. The food, having been broken down into suitable constituents, is then absorbed through the whole of the intestine, and taken by the blood stream to those parts of the body, where it is needed to make up for the wastage brought about by the various forms of bodily activity. The inabsorbable and waste products are evacuated at the lower end of the bowel, and this process which, in early life, is reflex and stimulated by distention of the bowel, becomes capable of increasing voluntary control as life proceeds. The function of the various digestive glands and also the control of the musculature of the intestine are outside conscious direction, and are very frequently subjected to emotional disturbance. There are few parts of one's physical being which react so rapidly to emotional stimuli.

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The Circulatory System is concerned with the supply of blood to the body and its organs. It is essential that there should be an adequate supply, because not only oxygen, which is necessary to life, but also many other chemical and nutritive substances, have to be thus conveyed. The system comprises the heart, which is the controlling and pumping mechanism, the outgoing vessels or arteries, which contain freshly ærated blood, and the returning vessels or veins, which bring waste products away from the body. The oxygen is provided through the lungs, the waste products are eliminated by the lungs, skin and kidneys, the two latter being the chief parts of the Excretory System. The rhythmic contraction of the heart muscle, which propels the blood along the arteries, can be felt at many places in the body, sometimes in the head, or in the scar of a wound, but most easily at the wrist, where the 'pulse' is familiar to all. When special strains of either a physical or mental nature are put upon the body, there will be an increased call for blood supply, and the increase of the pulse rate indicates the greater activity of the heart in response to this need.

The oxygen which the body needs is taken in through the lungs, which are the main part of the Respiratory System; here the carbon dioxide, which is produced by bodily activity, is given off from the impure blood, and supplies of oxygen are absorbed. This gaseous interchange takes place in the numerous minute air spaces, which are found in the spongy masses of the lung. Special calls upon the organism

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will react upon the work of the lungs and heart, and purely emotional states may be reflected in either of these systems, by increased or disturbed functioning.

The propagation of the species is the main concern of the Reproductive System. It is clear that it is differently arranged in the two sexes, though essentially there is a similarity. The male sex glands produce the spermatozoa, which are necessary for the fertilization of the ova, or female cells. These latter are thrown off periodically from the female sex glands. Through the act of coitus these two types of cell are enabled to meet in the female uterus or womb, which is so designed as to admit of the development of the human embryo. Apart from this function of the sex glands, there is an internal secretion that has been referred to, which is of great importance. The exact anatomy and physiology of sex is a subject on which everyone should be informed. Unless we ourselves know and understand something of it we shall have a poor chance of giving wise education to our children. This book is not the place in which to speak at length of the facts, but it certainly is the right place in which to emphasize the importance to everyone of an intelligent study of them.



### *Chapter III*

## Instincts and the Personality

The previous chapter gives a short outline of some of the bodily mechanisms which are in constant operation. Several volumes would be needed to give a really accurate picture of these processes, but sufficient has been said to arouse in the reader a sense of the vast intricacy of Nature's plan for human life. No thoughtful person reading even a sketch so brief as this can fail to realize how often the physical explanations of life must fall short of truth, and inevitably he finds himself seeking for psychological factors to take him one stage further towards understanding. What is it for example, he asks, that underlies the reflex activity which removes the finger from the heated object? What is the emotion of fear which stimulates the suprarenal glands, and through their activity produces so many bodily changes? And again, what lies behind this emotion? In attempting to answer questions such as these, it is necessary to look for a while at some of the vital systems of the mind, and particularly at the instincts.

An instinct is a function of the mind designed to preserve and perpetuate the existence of the individual. The two instincts that would seem to be most

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important are those of self-preservation and procreation, but there are many others which are allied to these two. In the main, as follows from the definition given above, the instincts are concerned with our own well-being, and, if they were left at their primitive level, they might result in the production of a selfish person. As, however, they pass through the refining fires of experience, and are adapted to meet the demands of circumstance and environment, they become a source of activity which has a definitely social value. These instincts are part of the racial inheritance of the individual; originally developed in response to challenging circumstances, they serve a useful purpose, and become incorporated in the life of the individual. Practically all of them indeed are common to animals as well as human beings. As life evolved, they became integrated into the mental make-up of the race, and are now transmitted, in varying degree, from our ancestors to us, and from us to our children. In just the same way that there is a physiological pattern in the parental elements which combine to form a new individual, there is also a mental pattern which is inherited and includes the instincts.

McDougall has elaborated the list of instincts, although everyone is not in complete agreement with his classification. He includes:

The instinct of escape or *self-preservation*. One of the fundamental instincts of which we shall have much to say in later chapters. The self-protection that results from this instinct is to be distinguished from parental protectiveness.

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The mating, or *sexual* instinct.

The *parental* and protective instinct, which is common to both sexes.

The instinct of *combat*, which will often seem to be allied to self-assertion.

The instinct of *curiosity*, universal and valuable.

The *food-seeking* instinct, or instinct of nutrition. This can be observed very clearly in the tiny baby, and in later life is not so obvious, although at times of famine or in similar situations it may become terribly insistent.

The gregarious or *herd* instinct, which has always led men away from solitude to demand companionship, and to band themselves into groups for various purposes, primitive or elaborate.

The instinct of *self-assertion*, from which come leadership and the demand for one's rightful place in the scheme of things.

The instinct of *submission*.

The *constructive* and the *acquisitive* instincts, which vary in their strength more perhaps than any of the others in any given individual.

These various instinctive forces come into play whenever there is an adequate stimulus provided by circumstance. The stimulus varies of course for each instinct, for there is something innate about the instinct which causes it to pick out, or focus on particular objects or situations. When the stimulus is present, we experience a certain excitement, or emotion, and there is a tendency towards appropriate lines of conduct. The more powerful the emotion, the greater the output of energy, and the expression

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of the impulse does not, as a rule, exhaust this energy. A common illustration is to be found in the stupendous leap taken by a man escaping from an infuriated bull, which is vastly in excess of his jumping capacity on ordinary occasions, the resulting achievement being derived from the impetus of the emotion of fear. There is always emotion associated with the operation of an instinctive impulse, and often we are aware that instinctive forces are present, only by the superficial demonstration of emotion. The emotion may be pleasant or unpleasant, according as the instinctive tendency is gratified or thwarted, and may therefore be said to be the result of the reaction between our instincts and our circumstances. However much we repress or distort the instinctive demands, the emotion which accompanies them tends to be characteristic and true to type. Those who experience the emotion of fear may be quite unaware of the circumstances outside themselves, or in their own mental life, from which they have reason to protect themselves, but, the emotion being true to type, it follows that the instinct of self-preservation must be active, and there must be some definite challenge that is feared. Every instinct has an objective, and will give rise to a particular emotion; the instinct of nutrition is directed towards food and drink as an object, and the emotions of hunger and thirst are experienced. The instinct of escape may be conditioned by a known or unknown object, but fear is the emotion. The impulse of combat will be directed against opposition of some sort, and the corresponding emotion will be one of anger. The

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submissive instinct will be directed towards a supposed superior, and the emotion of abasement will result. Tenderness is the emotion aroused when the parental instinct demands a child, or someone who is weaker to protect, and the gregarious or herd instinct gives rise to the feeling of loneliness.

These emotions, as their name implies, lead us on to definite conduct, and also through the Vegetative Nervous System, bring about bodily changes by stimulation of the endocrine system.

The emotion is not in itself an action, but rather the 'inner drive' and source of power, which makes active expression possible. The underlying motive or instinctive tendency may be quite unconscious, and in later chapters there will be a good deal to be said about the unconscious motive, which has already been mentioned, and which is of primary importance in modern theories of the origin of the neuroses.

McDougall has differentiated what he calls 'sentiments', and it is worth while to notice that, in psychological language, sentiment has a rather different meaning from that of common speech, where it is not always distinguished from emotion. He has classified sentiments as those of hate, love, contempt, respect, friendship, self-regard, the tender passion and the moral sentiment. He speaks of them as being 'an organized system of dispositions, which endures in a more or less quiescent condition between the occasions upon which it is brought into activity' (*Outline of Psychology*).

An emotion is part of the common psychological heritage of everyone, whereas a sentiment is peculiar

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to the individual, and is acquired as the result of repeated experiences of the same emotional feeling in relation to the same object; in fact, one might say that it was a sort of psychological conditioned reflex.

Having set out some of the essentials of structure and function, both from the physical and the mental side, we should be able to form some rough idea of human personality, which is compounded from both of these. It is not easy to give a definition of personality, and many varying ones have been attempted. What the ordinary man means, however, by personality is something which includes the temperamental make-up, the character, and shall we say the 'ego' of the individual. The word is derived from the Latin word *persona*, the mask used by Roman actors. As we use it to-day, it signifies the sum of all those qualities, physical, mental and spiritual, which distinguish a man from his fellows. Thus his ability to run is not part of his personality, but his ability to run better than his neighbour is so; it is his own special quality or gift. To the making-up of personality there must come hereditary factors on the physical side, instinctive tendencies which have been determined by race and ancestry, temperamental factors conditioned by the endocrine system, and all of these will be modified by the environment, education and experience that the individual meets in life. There are some writers who would lead one almost to believe that personality was entirely the result of the action of endocrine secretions, in short a question of Bio-chemistry; and anyone who acquires any degree of insight into the part

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played by these glands, and their secretions in the internal economy of the organism cannot but be impressed by the importance of this factor in the determination of the personality. One has only to study the child born without a Thyroid gland, and see the effect of Thyroid medication, to be convinced of this fact. Yet clearly we should be in error if we saw only this side of the picture and failed to take into account the mental inheritance. It is probably true to say that temperament is mainly the result of the endocrine and general physical make-up, and this accounts for many of the characteristic differences of the human race. Climate is a factor which influences the endocrine pattern, and consequently will be responsible for variations in temperament. The difference in physique and temperament of the Northerner and the Southerner, the Latin and the Nordic races, afford illustrations of this. Each climate produces its own peculiar characteristics, which are, to a very large extent, the outcome of the proportional admixture of the different internal secretions.

In addition to this temperamental background, the mature adult may have developed systems of ideas, organized sentiments, intellectual ability and definite moral standards; but it is important to realize that these in themselves cannot furnish the necessary criteria for mental health, and a balanced personality. It is frequently found that, co-existent with a developed character, intellectual, moral and ideational, there may be an emotional immaturity which constitutes a potential source of breakdown. To a large extent the experiences of life, derived from environment and

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human contacts, are responsible for the warpings and distortions of personality. Often we can do little to remedy or alleviate hereditary or physical factors. Much can, however, be done to modify the psychological factors that are at work, provided we have sufficient understanding of the situation. In the chapters that follow, an attempt will be made to study some of the problems that arise in connection with the development of the personality.



## Chapter IV

# Mind and Body

Every good and well-brought-up person has been nurtured on *mens sana in corpore sano*; but even of those who understand the meaning of the tag, comparatively few have much idea of the close and important interaction of the mind and body. Our understanding of the exact processes involved, is bound to be limited by our insufficient knowledge of the precise nature of mind, and its relation to the various neural mechanisms. It is quite possible, however, to see something of the effects on the functioning of the mind which are produced by bodily states, and of the physical conditions which are brought about by mental states; and, if mental health is our interest, it is necessary to think of these problems for a while.

For most people it is easy to grasp the fact that bodily states affect the mind; the converse is not so readily accepted. The majority of nervous breakdowns are ascribed to overwork. What could be simpler, or more convincing, although as we shall see later, this is but a very partial truth!

Roughly speaking, there are three ways in which ordinary physical conditions operate on the person-

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ality: (1) through alterations in the circulation of blood to the brain; (2) through poisoning or toxic states of the blood; and (3) through the operation of the organs of internal secretion, or the endocrine glands, which supply substances necessary for correct physical and mental functioning.

The deep and comfortable arm-chair, into which we sink with a general relaxation of all our bodily muscles, conduces to a state of mental lethargy and peacefulness because, through the bodily relaxation, the blood will tend to fill the trunk vessels rather than the cerebral ones and, in consequence, there is a diminution in brain activity. The reasonably comfortable upright chair is, for most people, the best setting for mental concentration.

Conditions of altered blood pressure produce very definite mental effects. The blood pressure is like the air pressure in the tyres of a motor car; it is dependent on the volume of blood in the circulation, and upon the size and elasticity, or lack of elasticity, of the vessels. With an increase in blood pressure there may be an increased cerebral circulation and vice versa. The man with a high blood pressure is often over-active mentally; sleeping may be difficult at night, and he may prefer to sleep well propped up, so as to give gravity its best chance of helping him to the necessary degree of cerebral anæmia. There are few people who have not experienced the soporific effect of a large midday meal, a hot drink, or a hot bottle by their feet at night; and all of these produce their effect by bringing blood away from the brain to some other part of the body.

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On the other hand, the man with a low blood pressure, has an inadequate cerebral circulation. Gravity is not on his side while he is erect, and he may feel a lack of mental grip. He does his best thinking when he is lying down, or sitting in an arm-chair with his feet on the mantel-shelf, for thus he brings gravity to his help, so that more blood gets to his head.

An injection of local anæsthetic by the dentist produces a sudden rise of blood pressure, and most people will experience a curious sense of mental confusion for a minute or two, while this heightened pressure persists. This is due to the adrenalin which usually is mixed with the Novocain.

It is not necessary to enter into discussions of the exact method by which a toxæmia produces its effect on the brain, and so on the mind. Normal sleep is, to a large extent, the result of an accumulation of fatigue products of the day. Just as there are waste products in the combustion of coal to produce coal-gas, so in the burning up of body tissue by physical and mental activity, there are end-products, and these cannot all be eliminated by the kidneys, skin or bowel. When they reach a certain point of accumulation, sleep supervenes; and, in the state of relative inertia of the organism, the poisonous or toxic products can be eliminated. Sleeping in fresh air tends to facilitate the process of elimination; we need less sleep, and wake with a greater feeling of refreshment and mental vigour, than if we had slept in a closed atmosphere.

Any form of overwork, be it physical or mental,

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which is kept up for a long time, is in this way liable to produce a mental effect. When we are tired out, our sense of proportion is notably deficient, and our most trivial problems are likely to get out of focus. The circumstances which appear mountainous in their difficulty at midnight will often be seen as molehills at 9 a.m. after a good night's rest. A very exaggerated instance of this type of disturbance is seen occasionally after a severe illness, or surgical operation, when, owing to the strain and shock, the patient's normal problems may get so distorted and impossible of adjustment that a serious mental breakdown occurs.

It is a matter of ordinary experience that constipation, which is persistent, affects our outlook on life and may rob us of *joie de vivre*. A jaundiced point of view may indeed be related to the physical disorder, and in other ways that ill-used and much libelled organ, the liver, at whose door is laid so much of the responsibility for our self-important bad temper, may in reality be responsible for some 'liverishness'. This leads us on to the instances of more definite poisoning. The toxin, which is liberated by the tubercle bacillus in the early stages of Phthisis, may sometimes act as a stimulant, and help in some measure to produce that curious elation and confidence which is called the 'Spes phthisica'. Alcohol also acts at first in this way, as a stimulant, having very definite mental effects which are known to us all (at least at second-hand), and which may have a definite value for sociability, although they constitute a very severe danger in that this easy escape from

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reality is the basic reason for most alcoholism. Alcohol poisoning, in its late stages, with its depressant and paralysing effect on the various centres of control, is a clear instance of the changes in mental functioning produced by physical causes.

There are febrile states in many diseases, notably in typhoid fever, where, owing to the acute toxæmia produced by the disease, mental states will be brought about, varying from the mild sense of unreality which most of us have known to accompany a temperature of, say  $103^{\circ}$ , through states of delirium to those of mania or delusion.

In the last few years the medical profession has laid increasing emphasis upon the question of focal sepsis in mental disorders. By focal sepsis is meant a localized infective process, going on at the roots of dead teeth, in the tonsils, the sinuses of the skull, the appendix or elsewhere. In cases where there is emotional or mental disequilibrium, there is no doubt whatever of the profound significance of such toxic processes. Recovery is often held up until something of this kind has been discovered and dealt with. A 'sepsis hunt' constitutes a very important preliminary to any psycho-therapeutic treatment, and a sane emphasis on the importance of these conditions will be a most effective prophylactic measure, resulting in a considerable decrease of serious mental disabilities.

The endocrine glands have already been mentioned, and, although we know a good deal about them, and the physical and mental effects which are produced by their faulty performances, we are as

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yet largely in the dark. The wholesale drug houses of Europe and America have commercialized our ignorance to an alarming extent, and monkey-gland has been a boon to copy-hungry editors. Despite all this, a great deal of sound experimental work is being done, and later generations are likely to have an endocrine key to many of the doors that to-day are closed to us. Problems of personality and temperament abound which are almost certainly connected with questions of glandular balance, and, did we but know what these were and how to remedy them, we should in all probability be able to produce mental changes for which to-day we labour in vain.

In our present state of knowledge we know more about the Thyroid gland than any of the others. Here the mental correlations are very noteworthy. With the Pituitary and the Gonads (sex glands) it appears to have an energizing function, and to be concerned with physical and mental growth. The mental outlook of the person with Grave's disease, where there is an excess of Thyroid secretion, is one of overactivity. The disposition is restless and over-excitable, with an over-reaction to all outside stimuli. The diminution of its activity by X-ray applications, or the surgical removal of part of the gland, brings about a great steadying, both of physical and mental characteristics. A deficiency of Thyroid secretion may be congenital, or may be acquired as the result of specific fevers, which have poisoned and atrophied the gland, or owing to other causes. Here, the typical picture is of underactivity, dull lethargy of

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mind and body, a bovine outlook on life, with a variety of physical concomitants which are useful for diagnosis and handicapping in themselves. The administration of Thyroid Extract will, at times, bring about an almost magical change in this condition, and give the person a new grip on life, which he could not have otherwise achieved.

Our knowledge of the mental effects of malfunctioning of the Pituitary gland is much more vague. On the physiological side we know that it is concerned with functions of growth. Giants and dwarfs result from over or underactivity of the gland, and the fat boy in the *Pickwick Papers* was a case of dyspituitarism. But we are, to a great extent, in the realm of speculation when we speak of the psychological counterparts. An American, Berman, in his book on *The Glands Regulating Personality*, has collected evidence to show that, in some way, the sense of power and drive is dependent upon the correct working of the gland. His contention that European history would have been different had Napoleon's Pituitary gland held out a little longer is interesting, but, of course, entirely speculative. There is, however, a small amount of evidence which seems to point towards something of the kind in individuals who are known for any cause to have a falling off in pituitary secretion.

Neurasthenia, that much diagnosed, but comparatively rare illness, where there is a true asthenia (*ασθενος* = without strength), following on some illness such as influenza, is usually associated with some upset and insufficient activity of the suprarenal

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glands. Here there is a typical picture of mental inactivity, and failure in grip.

Although outside the laboratory, we are as yet hardly able to alter the activity of the sex-glands—the testicles and the ovaries—we understand much of their functions and purpose. Their internal secretions into the blood stream, which are quite apart from their procreative function, are second to none in importance, from both the physical and the mental aspect. Sir Frederick Mott undertook a research some years ago into the question of *Dementia Præcox*, a mental condition in which there is an inability to stand up to life, and a consequent withdrawal of the personality into itself. In the established cases of the disease, which he investigated after the death of the patient he found that there had been a definite atrophy of the sex-glands, pointing to a correlation which undoubtedly exists between their proper functioning and a healthy, progressive attitude to life. It is at puberty of course that sexual development comes about: and with this, and because of this, the secondary sexual characteristics come into being; there are the physical signs of adolescence and in the mental sphere there are definite changes. Puberty means an increase in the desire for independence, an ability to take responsibility and to lead, and the beginning of a sense of the value of work for work's sake. These, and many other character traits are, to a large extent, dependent upon our gonad secretions. One can find a convincing parallel in the stallion and the gelding; the former an 'entire' horse, high-spirited, hard to tame, inde-



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pendent and self-assertive, while the gelding, which has had its sex-glands removed, is docile and mild, able to be driven in an old lady's invalid carriage.

What has been said here about the importance of the endocrine secretions from the mental point of view might perhaps be summarized by saying that, in the main, a deficiency of this sort reacts upon the mind by bringing about a sense of inadequacy, and this sense of there being something missing has often more effect than the actual lack itself.

Enough has been said to give the reader some picture of the multitudinous ways, in which conditions and reactions of our body affect the workings of our mind. The two are inseparable, and mental health can never be attained if we shut our eyes to things physical. In the past, however, the emphasis has been laid too strongly on the physiological side of our being and insufficient attention paid to those processes which are largely conditioned by our minds. A breadth of outlook, which can take in both aspects, is needed.

Many people have difficulty in realizing that definite physical conditions can be brought about by a mental cause. They recognize that an emotion can make them 'feel very happy' or 'feel fit to knock a house down'; but when it comes to the question of a headache, indigestion or constipation, they cannot grasp the fact that the only cause may be some emotional state; and still less can they apprehend that blindness, loss of hearing or a paralysed limb may come under the same category, and be, in reality, disorders of function rather than of structure.

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These mental effects are produced through the autonomic or vegetative nervous system, that part of the mechanism which is outside our direct conscious control.

If a hot poultice be placed on the side of one's face it produces a redness or erythema of the skin, due to an engorgement with blood of all the small capillary blood vessels in the skin and subcutaneous tissue. Here is a physical effect brought about by a physical cause, the heat. This same person experiencing a sudden emotion of shame may blush 'a brilliant scarlet'. The face looks the same and the condition of vascular engorgement is the same, but now the effect is produced entirely by an emotion.

Our digestive mechanism is peculiarly susceptible to emotional changes. Bad news, or excitement, are likely to upset the flow of digestive juices and so rob us of appetite; while fear is particularly likely to give rise to indigestion. The flatulence which affects those who live in a chronic state of anxiety is well known, as also the effect of any sudden fear. It is supposed that this correlation, between fear and gastric disturbance is the origin of the phrase 'to have the wind up'.

Cannon<sup>1</sup>, in speaking of emotions and bodily changes, tells the story of a woman patient who had to come up to a city in order to have a test meal examined, to help in the diagnosis of a stomach condition from which she suffered. A test meal is given on an empty stomach, and withdrawn for

<sup>1</sup> Bodily changes in pain, hunger, fear and rage. W. B. Cannon.

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examination by means of a stomach tube after a short time has elapsed. The woman came to the city and, after spending the night at her hotel, went along in the early morning to the house of the pathologist who was to make the test for her. The meal was withdrawn, but with it was returned also the majority of her previous night's supper, quite undigested. It would normally have passed on from the stomach within an hour or two of being taken. The explanation of this was that the lady's husband, having come up to town with her, had had the bad taste to go out on a drunken spree that night. Her anxiety had been great and this was the result. The test was repeated the following morning under happier domestic conditions and the result was perfectly normal. This is a well-marked example of a morbid condition which is found in many people. A high proportion of the dyspepsias are due to mental causes. Nervous dyspepsia would be better called emotional dyspepsia.

The study of the effects of fear provides us with the most useful examples of physical results. The muscular tension of the sprinter on his mark as he waits for the gun is in large measure due to his healthy fear. Unless he has 'the needle' he is not likely to win. More often, however, the results are less obviously beneficent. The man who is suddenly faced by some great danger provides a very typical picture, the novelists have often portrayed it: 'he stood rooted to the ground; his knees felt as if they would give under him; the sweat stood on his blanched forehead; his hair on end; and his eyes starting from their sockets; he gazed as one transfixed!' That is the sort of

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description with which we are familiar, and in addition: 'he trembled'; 'had a sinking feeling in the pit of his stomach'; 'stammered'; and, in the Old Testament, 'his tongue clave to the roof of his mouth'. All of these delineations are true, and there are many other signs of fear that may be shown. Henry V directs his soldiers to 'stiffen the sinews, summon up the blood'. When danger threatens us, and our instinct of self-preservation is challenged, there is an immediate response and we stiffen up ready either for fight or flight, to resist the danger, or to run our fastest in the opposite direction. The stiffening up, or over-tonus of the muscles, is therefore a beneficent measure designed for our protection. But it may of course be a very troublesome condition at times. Trembling would never take place if there were not this condition of tension of the muscles.

Relaxation of the limbs will always stop a tremor, unless this be one of organic origin. We change colour and sweat as the result of fear, and it is true that our hair does actually rise on our head, but it is an infinitesimal movement and not nearly so dramatic as the phenomenon in our household cat. The pupils dilate, and it is this which gives the appearance of the eyes starting from the head. The dry mouth, which gives rise to the expression that our tongue sticks to the roof of the mouth, is an everyday occurrence for many folk. Fear produces an inhibition of the flow of saliva to the mouth, and it is this that we experience in an awkward interview, and which necessitates the glass of water for public speakers, who might get self-conscious and thus ex-

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perience fear. No one who has been in for *viva voce* examinations can be ignorant of the effects that were produced at that time in them by the fear they felt, the stimulation of the kidneys leading to frequent micturition and the overactivity of the intestine.

These are samples of the physical, or bodily changes which are produced by fear, and it is not only the obvious external challenge which brings them about, it may be something much more subtle. We are in danger of being hurt and of course we experience fear, proportionate to what we suppose will be the degree of pain; but if we are particularly 'precious' people who have lived a safe and sheltered life and have been accustomed to be shielded from all hurt, we shall be over-afraid in proportion. That is to say that fear may be conditioned by personal attitudes, as well as by external circumstances.

When we meet a sudden danger we mobilize our body on a war footing, the better to meet it. The man who has an unconscious cause for anxiety and a consequent anxiety neurosis lives on a constant war footing and has the bodily changes associated with the mental state. He is on the defensive for something which he does not understand, and until he is helped to see the situation clearly, he must of necessity continue in his 'strung up' condition.

These physical effects are brought about by emotions which we experience. As has been explained, they are not consciously organized, but are effected through the autonomic nervous system. The nearest approach to a conscious control over these mechanisms is perhaps to be found in certain people who have

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developed their 'occult' or 'psychic' tendencies to a high degree of consciousness. The Indian fakir can, by a sort of self-hypnosis, produce extraordinary physical changes; and it is undoubtedly true that there are many Indians who have the faculty of dying if they want to die. No medical skill can keep them alive, if they have made up their minds that they will die.

The power of suggestion is immense, and can effect physical changes to a marked degree. It is doubtful whether auto-suggestion as directed by Coué is really self-suggestion; more likely it is in reality hetero (other) suggestion, dependent upon the spoken or written words, and the personality of the teacher. But whichever it is, auto-suggestion as practised can produce actual physical changes. Coué claimed, quite truthfully, that varicose ulcers had been cleared up by this means; and it is not difficult to understand this in the light of what has just been said about the susceptibility of the vascular system to emotional influences. An alteration in the circulation, sufficient to expedite the healing of such an ulcer, can certainly be brought about in one who is adequately suggestible.

The effect of suggestion under hypnosis is very much greater. Pain can be relieved or abolished under deep hypnosis to such an extent that an abdominal operation can be performed without an anæsthetic. If someone is deeply hypnotized, and a penny is placed on the back of his hand with the suggestion that it is very hot, although in reality the coin is quite cold, a blister will appear on the hand, cir-

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cumscribed to the area that the penny was covering. In any book on hypnosis there will be found many further experimental and practical examples, which demonstrate the physical effects which can be thus produced. It is sufficient here to emphasize the fact, in order to help the reader to appreciate the degree to which there is interaction between mind and body.

In the main we have to recognize the two groups of disorders, organic and functional; and the tendency in medical thinking, as in lay minds, has been to make a definite line of demarcation between the two. It is certainly useful to recognize which of the two factors is the more important in any individual case, because the line of attack in treatment will be most wisely chosen if we know this. But, as the reader will have gathered, it is practically impossible to say of any illness that it is entirely organic, or the reverse. Vicious circles are started so easily; mental depression may produce constipation, and this, in its turn, brings about a toxæmic condition and further depression, then further constipation, and so it goes on. The cheerful and confident doctor (provided he is reasonably able and painstaking) produces in his patient a feeling of confidence and hope. This mental impression and sense of euphoria (or well-being) is probably every bit as important as his medicines. It has its physical effect in producing a heightened immunity and resistance to disease, and so the process goes on, this time in the right direction. In each case the attack must be on two fronts simultaneously, on the physical and the mental.

There is, moreover, a group of illnesses, in which

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there is a very clear admixture of the two factors. For example, in conditions like chronic colitis there is often a neurotic factor; an anxiety may have produced the original effect upon the intestine, for, as has been explained before, the emotion of fear produces an overactivity of the large intestine, and it may be keeping up the condition. Further anxieties certainly increase the trouble, and at the same time the physical condition gives rise to anxiety. Epileptiform phenomena may be due to organic causes, or may be due entirely to mental factors. In so-called epilepsy, as in asthma, there is almost certainly some obscure physical factor, structural, chemical or metabolic, which brings about sensitiveness to such attacks in the individual. Research is going on continuously to discover the exact nature of these physical conditions; but there must be some stimulus which 'pulls the trigger', and in this over-sensitive condition, liberates the discharge of nervous energy which produces epileptic convulsions, or, under different conditions in a particular individual, sets up an attack of asthma. Often, no doubt, this stimulus is organic, but there are cases in which it is of an emotional kind. Where this is so it can at times be investigated, and the tendency to this particular kind of emotional reaction to circumstance be so altered that, although the person concerned may retain his epileptic make-up or his asthmatic diathesis, the stimulus being controlled, his attacks will cease. It is not suggested that epilepsy and asthma are due to the same cause, but only that the mechanisms may be similar. Nor would it be right to give



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the idea that more than a small proportion of sufferers from these diseases are likely, in our present state of knowledge, to be susceptible to psychotherapeutic help.

An instance of epileptic attacks, which were brought about by an emotional cause, occurred some years ago in a girl of seventeen. For two years before that time, she had suffered from fairly frequent attacks of what appeared to be true epilepsy. A mental investigation was carried out, and it was found that these attacks had come on just at the time she was due to start on a business training which meant travelling by train, by herself, each day from her home to the place of work. Because of the attacks she had been prevented from doing this, and had been obliged to stay at home. In speaking of this train journey, she showed clearly that the idea of it had been unwelcome, and upon further enquiry as to why she feared it, with great emotion she recalled the reason, which was that, shortly before the oncoming of her illness, she had been badly frightened by a man on the platform of one of the stations through which she would have had to pass each day. The incident had been acutely terrifying; she had spoken of it to no one, not even to her parents, and had succeeded in repressing it up to that day. As the episode was brought back to consciousness, and she was helped to get away from the exaggerated fear that had been associated with it, her attacks ceased and there was no later recurrence. In her case, the unconscious, or semi-conscious, fear had been the stimulus for her attacks, and the illness itself had served a useful

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purpose to her, in that it prevented her having to do the thing which she dimly knew she feared.

In asthma the mental factor is often very obvious. Baudouin, in his book, *Suggestion and Auto-suggestion*, tells a story which we may quote here: 'An asthmatic on a holiday journey, was awakened in his hotel by a violent paroxysm of the disease. Greatly distressed for breath, he got out of bed and hunted for the matches. He had a craving for fresh air, but could not find the window. "Confound these third-rate hotels, where one gropes vainly in the dark!" He is suffocating and he clamours for air. Feeling about he at length finds a pane of glass. "Damn it all, where's the window bolt? . . . Never mind, this will do!" and he breaks the pane. The fragments fall to the floor. Now he can breathe; again and again he fills his chest with the fresh air; the throbbing at his temples passes, and he goes back to bed. "Saved!" . . . Next morning, one of the items in his bill was: "Broken clock-case, francs 4.35".'

Whether or no this is a true story, it is very typical of certain asthmatics, and illustrates the part that suggestion may play. Adler has pointed out the symbolic importance of the respiratory trouble in asthma. It is, he says, the expression of a power urge; the asthmatic is struggling and racing (hence panting and fighting for breath); he is not conscious of what he is racing for, nor perhaps, of the rivalry of others which dominates him. There would seem to be a good deal of truth in this idea, and many examples might be given. An ambitious and capable woman teacher always got attacks of asthma when she had

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to 'play second fiddle' to anyone else. So long as she had the sense of being in command and was able to carry through her own plans, she was perfectly free from her trouble, whatever the physical or climatic conditions. Immediately her power was taken away by circumstances, she reacted to it by asthma. As she put it herself, when she had worked out the psychology of the situation: 'My asthma is an expression of thwarted ambition.'

It is an interesting, though as yet quite unsubstantiated theory, that all disease falls under one of two headings, mechanical or mental. By mechanical we mean such disorders of structure as are produced by accidents, injuries, or surgical operation. It has been suggested that all other diseases may ultimately be traced back to mental causes. Our drugs do, in many cases, act largely by suggestion, but it is not easy to explain away the specific action of certain drugs in particular diseases, nor is it easy to discount the facts of bacterial invasion. The theory, therefore, in this simple form would seem to be incomplete, yet there are many interesting facts which point in a similar direction. Warts can be removed by suggestion, and everyone knows that they can be 'charmed' away by anyone in whom we have sufficient confidence, and who himself has enough assurance. Whatever the apparent medium—herbs or what not—the principle behind the charm is always mental suggestion. There are spontaneous cures at times of tumours and other similar conditions, which are genuinely organic in nature, and, so far as we can tell, almost anything may be re-

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sponsible for the 'cure', medicine, psychotherapy, suggestion, vaccines, herbs, climates, new experiences, osteopathy, Christian Science, Lourdes, or an Albert Hall evangelistic meeting.

Every new treatment or cult claims cures, and the great majority of these are in cases which are predominantly psycho-neurotic and open to suggestion. Without doubt, however, there are organic cases which do benefit, and we can only suppose that it is through mental means.

It might almost be said that any new line of treatment, however foolish it appears, will produce results just so long as the person who employs it, and the person on whom it is practised, have faith. The stronger the claim that is made for any line of treatment to be a panacea, the more striking for a time will be the results obtained. A modern instance of this is provided by the Abram's Box, an American electrical invention of the post-war period. It seems clear that, so long as the men who used it had complete faith in it, they were able to make singularly accurate diagnoses, and to improve or cure a very large variety of conditions; but so soon as they began to have any doubts about it, they lost this capacity.

As yet we know too little about these problems of psycho-physical interaction to be very definite, but it is certain that we need an open mind. We want every additional piece of research that is possible along physical lines. Every advance in the laboratory, in general medicine, and in surgery must, of necessity, contribute to the relief of suffering and, at the same

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time, take us nearer to ultimate truth. Equally we need to have an increasing awareness of the mental (and spiritual) factors at work, and investigation, with sane and controlled experiments on this line, must also take us further on towards knowledge.

Faith healing, which ignores the physiological facts and the accumulated experience of medical science, is quackery; and, although it may bring about cures and help some, it will do great harm to others, both by encouraging them to neglect established scientific facts and proved methods of treatment, and also by weakening their religious faith if the miracle does not happen in the way they have been led to expect. It seems never to occur to some people that spiritual forces can work through human intelligence, and that 'simple faith' is very often blind—sometimes culpably blind—faith.

Religion and idealism play a very important part in the search for health. Religion is the result of an instinctive demand, and human beings, whatever their 'intelligence quotient' may be, are always seeking hungrily for some philosophy of life which contains spiritual values, and this has to be the highest they can find, the nearest approach they can make to what seems to be truth for them. In the psycho-neurotic disorders which are based upon mal-adjustment to life there is always a turning of our interest on to ourselves, an ego-centric attitude as opposed to one in which our interest goes out naturally to affairs and people outside ourselves. If we are to win through to freedom and find health of mind, we must have something in life which is more

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worth loving than ourselves. The higher and truer the ideal to which we direct our interest, the more easily will all the difficulties of our life fall into their proper places in our scheme of living. Here, then, is one of the biggest fields of usefulness for sane work along religious lines. To some extent this is the explanation of conversion (in the religious sense) in which, owing to the clear and convincing presentation of an ideal, there is a profound emotional change produced, and a transferring of interest from unworthy to worthy objectives in life.

In the sphere of organic disorders it is hardly less important that there should be the right mental attitude towards the illness itself and towards recovery. There must be the will to live, and the more worth while life appears to the patient, the greater will be the incentive to recover and the more 'spirit' will he have to carry him through. Self-pity and resentment against life are two of the tendencies which show themselves in most of us who have any serious illness, and a philosophy of life which does not pretend that illness has no place in the scheme of things, but which rather seeks to emphasize the part it may play in character building, and in the universal and many-sided struggle towards perfection, may be as sure a help as the surgeon's knife. Along lines such as these, spiritual healing is vastly important, for it can bring real values, and a sense of purpose into an otherwise chaotic existence.

## *Chapter V*

# Psychological Mechanisms

THE reader who has followed the argument up to this point will have been given some impression of the structure of the nervous system and the nature of mind, however inadequate that impression may be. This present chapter is in some sort the watershed of the book, for here we pass over from the consideration of structure and composition, to see the machinery of the mind in action and to attempt to understand something both of its correct and faulty functioning, as we see it in everyday life.

In order that we may take an intelligent interest in the working of our mind, and in the behaviour patterns which are produced, we must first try to grasp some of the more common mental mechanisms of ordinary life. There are, needless to say, a very great number of types of mental reaction, mostly fairly simple, out of which are built up the more complicated, and sometimes almost un-understandable, elaborations of our thought life. We cannot attempt to make a complete classification of all these, but we shall have gone some way towards an understanding, if we grasp the principal ones. A parallel

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instance would be to make an analysis of the physical processes involved in the act of walking. The mechanisms by which we voluntarily bend and straighten our joints by muscular contractions, and the elaborate process by which we keep our position relative to fixed objects, such as the ground, the horizon and our goal, are some of the main constituents in this complex activity. Being aware of these, we have a better understanding of the act. In just the same way there are many mechanisms involved in the apparently ordinary, but really very complicated, mental activities of our everyday existence.

*Projection.* When a lantern slide is placed in the optical lantern the picture is projected on to the screen, which is at a distance. The picture is, in fact, seen only on the screen, and we do not think of it being actually within the lantern. This is a fairly good illustration of the mental process which is called projection, by which we displace, usually to our great comfort, certain feelings we may have, and relate them to some other object or person rather than to ourselves.

Everyday instances of this mechanism abound, as for example when we are irritated with our own lack of skill in golf, we become annoyed with our clubs, the ball or the turf, and indeed, sometimes feel quite sure that the game is a stupid one, not worthy of our intelligence, so that in the end our unwillingness to face our failure, and to criticize ourselves, may end in a projection which is so successful that we give up the game altogether.

Again, our annoyance with ourselves over some-



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thing may easily be vented on a perfectly innocent person. A trivial remark of theirs may be the peg on which we hang our irritation and anger, and by making them the whipping-boy for our own shortcomings, we save ourselves, at any rate for the moment.

It is not difficult to see that a process such as this, which we can all recognize in our ordinary life, may come into operation in much more important matters, blinding our vision and confusing our judgment in a most serious way. To quote an instance—a young man with considerable ability had a serious nervous breakdown, of which the main symptom was a quite unreasonable anxiety over his business affairs, and a sense of complete inadequacy in their management. Actually, the business was going very well and there was no objective reason for these feelings of his. On investigation it was found that he had recently become engaged; he was the youngest son, over-mothered and too dependent, and although he wished to get married because he was fond of the girl and also because it was 'the thing to do', he feared taking the plunge, and doubted his own ability to make a success of a situation which demanded on his part so much self-reliance. His self-esteem and his loyalty to his fiancée prevented his facing this real difficulty and the whole anxiety was projected on to his business.

*Transference.* This can be defined as the tendency to live over again a particular emotion, in the presence of a person resembling the one with whom that emotion was previously associated.

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This again is a very ordinary and everyday mechanism which may lead us to happy or unhappy relationships to people, that is to say, there may be positive or negative transferences. The mistress, who has just had a difference of opinion with her cook, may easily live her emotions over once more, when the housemaid comes to her with a perfectly reasonable request for an afternoon off. She transfers the emotional 'affect'.

The man for whom the most intimate and satisfying experiences of early life are associated with the face, or the voice, of his mother, is likely to experience again in adult life a similar set of emotions, when he meets a woman whose voice or appearance resemble hers. Here there is a real danger because, if he fails to differentiate between the filial love of childhood, and the much deeper and more comprehensive love of the adult, he may consider himself 'in love', and so marry one who is in actual fact primarily a mother substitute, and with regard to whom there must come disillusionment.

To give a further example, which may be observed daily by any one of us: the man who has a rebel tendency, almost a compulsion, to challenge and disagree with everyone else, and to resent all authorities, whether social, ecclesiastical, or political is, more often than not, reacting to each of these just in the way he, in his youth, met unreasonable authority in his father or schoolmaster. The emotion is there, and emerges on every suitable, similar occasion. A man in middle life, who had the greatest difficulty in expressing his thoughts at all freely, sud-

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denly recalled one day a childish episode in which, challenged by his father, whom he feared, he had stood miserably on one leg, inarticulate. 'You are my father,' he said to the doctor and, by recognizing the transference, he set himself free to a great degree from his inhibition of speech. There is a common factor between transference and projection, in that both are substitutional in nature.

*Identification.* The small child has a very limited experience of life and few standards by which to judge. It tends, therefore, to identify itself with the interests of its elders, and with their emotions also. It lives with them through their fear of thunderstorms and dogs, their anger with the plumber and their appreciation of beauty.

In many ways this is, of course, a valuable educative process; but it has its danger, and the tendency may persist so strongly as to rob the individual in later life of some of his, or her, personality, and the right to that detachment which conduces to sound judgment.

Perhaps the most understandable and excusable instance of this is found in the mother's attitude to her child. She has brought it into the world, and would be almost unnatural if she did not identify herself with its experiences and feelings. Yet even here there is a danger of that emotional identification blinding and warping her judgment. The mother and child have gradually to grow away from each other and attain a new relationship.

To understand another's worries, and be able to see things through his eyes, is not the same thing as

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identification. A doctor certainly needs imagination and understanding in his contacts. The doctor, however, who identified himself with his patients and their suffering, would not be able to carry on his work. He would, in losing his carefully cultivated detachment, have lost his judgment and power to criticize, and have put himself under an impossible strain. This sharing of emotion with other people may sometimes lead to our rejoicing with those that rejoice, but also to our sharing their headaches and other symptoms, and, with persons of a hysterical type of mind, even to the development of wounds or disease. There are a number of instances of this on record in religious history.

The term identification is also employed to describe a slightly different process, the absorption in a particular object, or interest, or symptom. In ordinary speech we may be identified with 'a cause', and in fact this happens to most people more intensely and more often than it should. We 'get things on our mind', a process which may be visualized in this way. We have a considerable number of interests and problems all of which have a right to our consideration; a photograph is to be taken of them in a group, and some will be in the foreground, others in the background according to their importance. There will be our interests in ourselves, home, children, politics, religion, sex and a crowd of others, and we must arrange them as we think fit. At times, however, one of these interests comes out of the group, and stands in front of the camera lens so that, not only is it out of focus, but it is out of relation to everything

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else and blocks our view of the other interests. Then it is 'on our mind', we are identified with it. There can only be one remedy for this situation, which is to push the intruder back, kindly, but quite firmly, to its place in the group. This may sound easy but, as most people know, is not accomplished without difficulty.

*Compensation.* To demand compensation for an injury is no mere phenomenon of modern industrial life, it is a universal and automatic mechanism of our mental life. No one suffers an injury to his self-esteem, without the desire to find compensation in some form or other. This desire may be satisfied by the adoption of a certain course of conduct or attitude of mind, while at times it may be recognized, and set aside as being unworthy of attention.

The small child, who has been rebuked for some misdemeanour, feels that its dignity has suffered, as indeed it may have if the rebuke has been given in an unwise fashion, and, feeling small, needs to find compensation. It therefore assumes an air of non-chalance or detachment and will walk away with hands in pockets, whistling ostentatiously. This is a well-known situation and the prototype of a number of performances in later life. The boy or girl at school, who feels that he or she is not good at games, will often tend to emphasize intellectual success, instead of trying to be better at games and thus securing an all-round development. Most adolescent 'swank' is a compensation for some supposed inferiority. Everyone recognizes this in the important pomposity of some of their friends, to whom nature

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has given short measure of stature; in the over-confident manner of the man who is not sure of himself; and in the two-seater Rolls-Royce of the man who is socially sensitive. These are types of reaction which are familiar, and which point to the tendency which everyone can find in himself either in a crude, or a more subtle form. Often they are perfectly harmless, but sometimes they will produce an artificiality, which is disastrous to the expression of our real personality. Those who are interested in studying the nature of phantasies and dreams will find in them abundant evidence of this compensatory tendency. The desires, which it is impossible to satisfy in reality, are easily gratified in our phantasy life. Reference is made to this further on in the book, as also to the extremely important problems associated with the superiority-inferiority conflicts, which give rise to most of the situations in which compensation is desired.

*Repression.* The mechanisms that have just been considered are very normal ones, yet they may become abnormal or pathological, and play a part in the causation of diseased states of the mind. The process of repression also resembles the others in this, but it is perhaps of greater importance than any of the others in the production of psycho-pathological conditions.

Broadly speaking, repression means a process by which thoughts or emotions are pushed out of consciousness into unconsciousness, or that deeper part of the mind where they can be forgotten. We can deliberately suppress thoughts, with varying degrees

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of success, but repression is a mechanism which is hardly so much under our own control as this. We repress because we have good reason to do so, in that we are not able to integrate, or satisfactorily fit some experience into consciousness. We suppress because we consciously do not want to integrate our experience, which is a very difficult situation.

There has been much loose usage of the word repression in recent years, and, indeed, it has become such a formula with many people, that it has almost no meaning. They are able to assure themselves, whenever they cannot have anything they want, that there is a repression, and that the obvious cure for their condition is a self-indulgence, a very comfortable but unsound doctrine.

Repression is, in fact, a method of evading a conflict. Life, with its increasingly complex civilization, the establishment of conventions and taboos, becomes more and more dogmatic with regard to the management of our primitive instinctive tendencies, and so there is inevitably a conflict in our minds. We have certain standards for ourselves, which may have been thought out, but which more often are acquired wholesale from our parents, or the society in which we live. As our experience of life widens, we find the instinctive demands of sex, self-preservation and so on, making themselves felt, and these demands are often in conflict with our standards. To face and solve the difficulty in a reasoned fashion would involve work and sacrifice, and change, for which we are not prepared. If the conflict is serious, and likely to be disturbing, there is only one other road

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to peace. Either one or other of the combatants must be made to disappear from the battlefield of consciousness, that is to say, we must repress our ideal, or else our instinctive demand. This is, in fact, what takes place very frequently. (Freud has created a nomenclature and speaks of these warring elements as the Super-Ego and the Id). By evading the conflict, we make an apparent adjustment to life which can, however, never be sound, or proof against future disturbances, because it has been effected on the basis of repression.

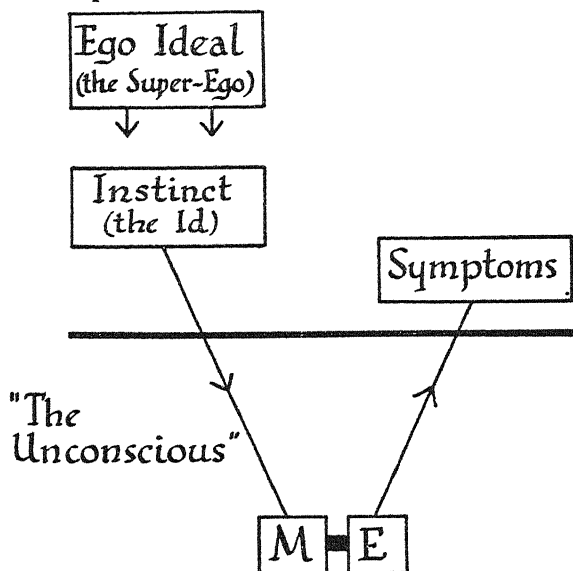


Diagram to illustrate the mechanism of Repression.

M - the Memory and E - the Emotion, which dissociates from it and returns to consciousness



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The diagram, opposite, gives a rough idea of what occurs in a typical repression. Usually the Ego-ideal, the idea of ourselves which we have acquired, is the repressing force. In order to remain alone in the field of consciousness, it forces down the instinctive tendency which would conflict with it, so that this is lost sight of or forgotten. There is, however, emotion attached to the desires which are repressed, and this is very likely to split off, and re-emerge into consciousness in an exaggerated form, as a neurotic symptom of some kind.

This looks very simple when it is put in a diagrammatic form, but, needless to say, it is not usually so easy to see; not even for the detached critic, let alone the person in whose mind the repression has taken place. Weeks of hard work along the lines of mental analysis are often needed, before it is possible to demonstrate the processes which have led to the formation of a symptom through repression.

The simplest example of a repression that one can take, is perhaps to be found in the forgetfulness of ordinary life. There are, of course, good and bad memories, trained and untrained ones, but no doubt many of the things we forget, we have in reality repressed for a purpose. Most people could parallel in their own experience cases of this sort: Mrs. X is invited to tea with Mrs. Y; she accepts with pleasure; the day comes; and that evening Mrs. X suddenly recalls with horror that she has quite forgotten the tea invitation. She is filled with genuine sorrow at having broken her word, and at the rudeness of her action, and writes or telephones to Mrs.

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Y. Then, if Mrs. X has an inquiring mind and is willing to be critical of herself, she sits down to ask herself why she forgot, and finds that really for some reason or other she did not want to go. Having promised to go, her ideal picture of herself, as a woman of her word, would have been damaged had she not gone. Unconsciously, therefore, she repressed the desire to stay at home, dismissing it in fact as unworthy. The wish thus repressed came back into consciousness as a loss of memory, which operated for this one particular appointment (the repressed wish to forget returned to consciousness as the act of forgetting, i.e. the symptom) and the end was achieved without any sense of conscious breach of faith. Being filled with sorrow for her forgetfulness, her self-esteem was saved.

This hypothetical incident is put at some length, and its explanation may strike the reader as laboured, or 'quite unnecessary'. It usually *is* quite immaterial that we should analyse all our slips of memory. Those who choose to do it, however, will find that substantially this is the underlying mechanism, and it is necessary to think out some few of these ordinary examples for ourselves, if we are to understand the more complex and important mental processes.

Coming now to the more complicated instances of repression, with resultant symptom-formation, it will be most easy to illustrate by taking an instance, in which the whole process has worked itself out within a short space of time, rather than one of those cases where the whole life history has to be reviewed, in order to understand the trouble. The European war

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gave us an immense amount of material on which to work, and a typical case of shell-shock (a War Anxiety state) illustrates this mechanism very well. There will be few readers who did not see such men, and who, therefore, need to be told of the picture they presented. In the main it was a picture of fear, a lined and anxious face, dilated pupils, a general muscular tenseness of the whole body, which led to tremors and predisposed to a great over-reaction in response to any sudden external stimulus; they would jump, start or 'dither' on the least provocation.

The state of anxiety then was the symptom. Obviously it was not consciously desired or organized, so that it must have been caused by the emergence of some repressed emotion. Fear must at some time have been repressed, forced out of consciousness, because it was in conflict with some idea, which constituted the repressing force, just in the way in which the diagram on page 92 suggests.

The investigation of one of these cases usually showed something like this. The patient was a man who joined the army, and went to the Front without having thought out his own position in relation to the dangers that he was bound to face. He had, at any rate, not realized that he was afraid of being afraid. Fear is the normal emotion which everyone experiences in face of any challenging situation, our instinct of self-preservation takes care of that; cowardice is not fear, but the indulgence of fear which takes us away from our duty. It is one of the commonest mistakes to confuse fear with cowardice, and the man who developed shell-shock had done that. His

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idea of himself was that he was a man who should be brave, someone who must not feel fear. Being 'brave like a little soldier' is one of the very usual maxims of the nursery, and the idea tends to persist. In this man's mind, therefore, this idea meant that if he admitted fear to himself, he was, to some extent, being disloyal to his ideal and his patriotic duty. He went out to the Front and there, sooner or later, he experienced fear. In some instances a very slight fear was sufficient to cause a conflict, whilst in others it needed some of the more tragic and ghastly experiences of the trenches. Whatever it was that made the impression on his mind there was only one thing to be done if he was to keep his 'brave soldier' phantasy intact. The fear had to go and that was achieved (quite unconsciously of course) by repression. Very likely there was a loss of memory for a definite period, an hour, a day, a week or longer. This amnesia or loss of memory persisted, jealously guarded, because there were in that period, memories the emotion associated with which was painful. Had this emotion been recognized, it would have upset the adjustment to life, which the man had thus achieved for himself. Similar losses of memory occur from time to time in civilian life, provided that there is a sufficiently acute conflict to warrant them. Our newspapers tell us of men and women who have lost their memory, and been found wandering in some obscure place, and sometimes, a few months later, they reveal the cause by recording the bankruptcy, or other catastrophic circumstance, which had provided an impossible challenge at the earlier date.

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When our soldier had repressed his fear and with it, most likely, the memory of the associated episodes, he carried on perhaps for a time, often becoming increasingly 'nervy' until the process was repeated and he broke down because of the impossibility of maintaining the repression sufficiently well. One cannot keep steam in a boiler if the safety valve is shut; the boiler will burst.

In the same way the emotion of fear cannot be indefinitely dammed up, but is bound to find some way of expressing itself. At first sight it might have appeared a very sound and healthy thing to 'forget' the unpleasant memories of the past. In actual experience, however, it is proved that those things which we repress, or forget because we fear them, or shall we say because they tend to upset our peace of mind or our self-esteem, are likely to return in some form or other as a neurotic symptom. Often, of course, this may be so slight as to be almost imperceptible. The way in which the repressed fear returned to consciousness can be understood from the diagram. The memories, or historical facts associated with the incidents, could remain forgotten. The mere statement that he was buried by an enemy shell had no emotion attaching to it, any more than the statement that one's only child had died need of necessity bring up all the emotions which had, in fact, been associated with the actual episode. In the case of the soldier, however, the emotion could not easily be put away, hence there came about a dissociation of the emotion (E) from the memory (M). The dissociated fear came back

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into consciousness, and constituted his symptom.

The war-dreams of the shell-shock patient provided an interesting example of this mechanism. The original memory was an ugly and unwelcome one, and was pushed like a jack-in-the-box down into its case (the unconscious). As long as he was awake and kept his hand on the lid, all was well; but when he went off to sleep his hand slid gently off the box and—out came the 'Jack', looking much more alarming and repulsive as a war nightmare, than it ever had in real life. In waking life the fear was more completely dissociated from the actual experience than in the dream life. So we had the man, forgetful of much of his war experience, but dominated by a great fear or anxiety, which, being unattached, could be fastened on to any trivial episode of post-war life. The sudden loud noises, which would just startle the ordinary person, made him jump violently and start sweating with fear; the reproof from an employer would start an outburst of anxiety, and he would begin to tremble from head to foot; or a hysterical fit was his reaction to a street accident. In every case of this sort, the trivial episode was the peg to which his free emotion could be attached. The fear that appeared to be occasioned by the circumstances of his civilian or hospital life was, in reality, the result of his war experiences.

There were many lines of treatment adopted for these war patients, but where there was a background of normal intelligence, the method which proved the most successful was that of getting the patient to revive his memories, either by continuous talking,

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or under hypnosis, and, by re-living them, to bring about a reassociation of the memory and the appropriate emotion. This was often very painful, and, until the experience had been gone through several times, it was difficult to get it into focus as an actual experience of the past. Yet, when once the patient had accepted the fact that the experience was past, he put the emotion where it originally belonged. It was now no longer free and in consequence all the symptoms, the outward manifestations of fear, disappeared. This may be said to provide a proof of the theory of repression; and, indeed, one can get further still towards a proof because in these patients, although the symptoms would go when the memories had been revived, there would sometimes be a relapse, due to the fact that the man had an insufficient understanding of the original cause of the repression. He had, more or less willingly, revived his unpleasant memories or fears, and been able to dismiss them as belonging to the past, but had not found out why he had originally needed to repress, and so his 'brave soldier' phantasy remained unchallenged. While this phantasy remained, he was likely to repeat the original mistake, saying to himself: 'Oh, but of course, I wasn't really afraid,' and thus he was liable to a fresh repression and a consequent recurrence of the symptoms. Permanent cure involved, therefore, the criticism and revaluation of his ideas of fear and cowardice.

In later chapters of this book reference will be made to the operation of this mechanism in ordinary civilian life. It may be well, however, to point out how com-

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mon this error of confusing fear and cowardice is in ordinary people. Fear is so often exaggerated because we are ashamed to admit it, and, blaming ourselves for feeling it, tend to repress it. The result is that we get an exaggerated emotion, which may be attached to all sorts of trivial experiences.

*Conversion Symptoms.* Before leaving this brief summary of some of the mechanisms of the mind, reference should be made to the tendency which many people, and especially those of a hysterical type of mind, have, to convert their worries and conflicts into physical symptoms.

There are many persons who consider themselves normal, who yet react to any upset, or time of mental strain, by a headache or an attack of asthma. Their conflict is expressing itself in this way rather than just 'bringing on' the trouble.

In nervous breakdown, it is comparatively common to find a physical symptom replacing a conflict, so that the patient complains only of the physical symptom, and is quite unaware of the underlying conflict. Usually it is possible to see that the physical symptom is an attempt to solve the conflict, and that in a roundabout and irrational way, it gets for the patient something which he wants.

A girl of eighteen was extremely unhappy in her home life, and not very popular at her place of business. On her way downstairs from a trying interview with the manager of her firm she slipped and twisted her ankle. Instead of the damaged ankle recovering in a few days, it got worse, and she developed a complete paralysis of the leg. In herself she was quite



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cheerful, but with this mysterious illness she could not go to the office, and everyone at home was so kind and nice to her! It was in no sense malingering, but only the conversion of her desires into a physical ailment which brought about their realization, and this was entirely unconscious.

## *Chapter VI*

# Mental Breakdown: Its Cause and Its Cure

THIS is a chapter to which many will turn for specially personal reasons. Perhaps they themselves have had, or may fear having, such an illness; or else they have concern for their friends who suffer in this way. One cannot feel that it is in any way unseemly that they should do so in this spirit, provided that they can keep a certain nice detachment, and not identify themselves overmuch with the hypothetical sufferer. There are few families in which there is no one who is nervous, 'high-strung' or sensitive, and in a large proportion of families there have been nervous breakdowns, by which it is implied that the nervousness reached such a pitch that it was impossible to keep on with work, or to follow the ordinary routine of life. This term 'nervousness', which we all tend to use, is in reality a very poor one, and conveys a false impression. The educated may sometimes realize that in actual fact the physical nerves are not involved, but that the symptoms so described are due to mental and emotional disturbances. The less understanding public has certainly got the wrong impression about it, and, consciously or unconsciously, associates the

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symptoms with organic changes in the nervous system. From this idea there often springs hopelessness, a longing for some magical physical cure, and a considerable difficulty in appreciating the true state of affairs, and the part which clear thinking can play in cure. It is this wrong idea on which the advertisements of patent medicines have concentrated, and which also, in the past, has led to much drug treatment from the medical profession. It will have been evident, in the chapter before last, how close a relationship there is between the physical and the mental, and how deeply grooved the vicious circles between them may become, so that one cannot possibly stand for the point of view that all medicine is useless. Manifestly, in many cases, it can be of the utmost service, and without the help of drugs it might be impossible to get into such a state of physical health as to bring about mental health.

There is, however, an increasing amount of evidence to show that, in the vast majority of functional nervous disorders, the fundamental cause of the trouble is mental, i.e. it has to do with a disorder of some part of our mental life, our thinking or our feeling, and that the physical conditions, which may be coincident, act primarily by making it difficult, or impossible, for us to straighten out these mental tangles.

If we could by education overcome popular prejudice, it would therefore be better to call these conditions of neurosis, mental or emotional disorders. It is for this reason that the present chapter is headed Mental Breakdown. Starting from this conception

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of the trouble, it is easier for the average man or woman to focus on the essential points, and to avoid much useless self-pity or recrimination over supposed physical shortcomings. Taking again the illustration of the brain as a telephone exchange with incoming and outgoing lines, we might say that, in the neurosis, there is nothing wrong with the exchange, nor with the wires; what is at fault is the way in which the system is operated.

A breakdown in mental functioning, which interferes with that peace of mind to which we are all entitled, may be of any degree of severity. A feeling of petty irritation, which most of us would pass over very easily, is, in the strict sense, a breakdown or disturbance of the normal healthy working of our mind. If it be repeated sufficiently often it will repay study, for underlying it there will be some mental conflict which, if seen, can most likely be solved. Worry, in the sense of having to puzzle out the answer to some problem, is a necessity in life. We should worry; but worry that nags, obsesses, and wears us down can very easily come into the picture and then is abnormal, a diseased or pathological condition. Fear is the normal result of any challenge to our instinct of self-preservation, and is of considerable value. Our lives in London streets would be uninsurable, if we had no fear to dictate courses of safety to us. If, however, we are unreasonably afraid of actual dangers, or if quite inadequate causes produce fear, it is evident that something has gone wrong and that there is need for investigation. We may follow some particular line of thought, or make some gesture or

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action a few times without any very sufficient purpose, and it would be in no way abnormal, but if for some reason, unconscious to ourselves, there is developed a pattern in our thinking, which results in a definitely obsessional or compulsive state of mind in which we must carry on the habit, we should be dealing with a condition which quite easily might interfere with the normal routine of life, and so constitute a real breakdown.

These are only suggestions of some few ways in which certain very trivial mental processes may, given the wrong conditions, grow into such proportions as to bring about breakdown. The reader will glean many further examples of similar mechanisms as he reads on in the book, but from these instances we can amplify our idea of what constitutes a mental breakdown. It is a condition of failure to fit into our own particular bit of life, a maladaptation to some part of our responsibility or our work. Life is the round hole and we are the square peg. Sometimes, especially in childhood, it may be possible to make the hole relatively square to fit the peg. It is more often than not unwise to do so, for in later life there can only be one solution, namely, that we adapt ourselves by chipping off our own square corners. 'The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars, but in ourselves,' will generally be found to be true. It may be worth while trying sometimes to alter the stars, in the shape of environment. It is certainly of little value to anything except our perseverance, to push against a massive wall, when there is a way round it that we are free to take. Improved housing conditions would

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mitigate the social problems, and the sense of injustice and deprivation, from which so many of our fellows suffer; equally a job as a bar-tender is usually not the wisest one for the reformed drunkard, even though he has realized that his retreat into alcoholism has been an ineffective method of solving or evading some of the challenges of life.

Before we try to see further into the factors which cause instability or breakdown, it will be well to look at the bogies which are most often raised in our minds, some of which are certainly predisposing conditions.

Mental defect is an inherited condition and because little or nothing can be done to remedy it, though quite a lot can be accomplished for its victims through suitable training, it constitutes one of the big social problems. For one of a variety of causes there is a definite defect in the brain substance, which in varying degrees limits its capacity. In cases of gross defect it will be obvious in the very early years of life, while in less marked cases the parents may not become clearly aware of the trouble, until backwardness at school, and in growing up, manifests itself. There are definite and elaborate tests of intelligence, the best known of which is the Stanford revision of the Binet-Simon scheme, by which mental age can be gauged, and the intelligence quotient (I.Q. as the educational psychologists speak of it) worked out. The average I.Q. is 100 and that of any individual is expressed in numbers relative to this, so that the unusually intelligent child may have an I.Q. of 130 or higher, while the subnormal child will stand perhaps at 60 or 70.

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Genius may be a handicap in the struggle for mental balance, and it certainly is at times; but it needs little imagination to see that an actual mental incapacity is even more so. Not only is there an inability to learn or to think as easily as others, but from early days there is a growing sense of inadequacy, which makes the sufferer feel even more inferior in comparison to his fellows, than he actually is. This inferiority sense is inhibitory of effort, and sometimes may lead to ridiculous actions, motivated by the desire for compensation. We may therefore expect that the mentally defective child will over-react to the environment and emotional circumstances of his life.

Injuries at birth, or similar traumatic occurrences, may bring about an actual disability and a consequent mental reaction which is very comparable to that of the defective child; while in diseases such as sleepy sickness (*encephalitis lethargica*), which tend to affect the brain tissue, there may be added to this state certain specific effects, which lead to a total change of character. Irresponsibility, lack of moral sense, crime, vagrancy and imbecility may at times result from this dread disease about which we know too little at present. Endocrine failures of various sorts may also be predisposing factors to mental breakdown, and this may come about at almost any time of life, though puberty, and to a lesser extent 'the change of life' are times of rather special stress. Investigation is needed along lines such as these, if we are to understand the conditions antecedent to mental trouble.

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Heredity is in reality less important than any of these conditions of which we have just spoken, yet for a great many it provides a first-rate bogey. There are so many instances, known to most people, where insanity has occurred in the children of parents who were insane, and where the children of 'nervy' parents have turned out to be neurotic as they grew up, that people have little difficulty in believing that mental disorders of this type are inherited. While it is not possible to give an absolute or sweeping denial to this theory of inheritance, informed modern opinion holds quite definitely that heredity is of very little importance as compared with environment. Tuberculosis is not inherited, but there may be passed on a certain predisposition 'in the soil' to tubercular infection. Insanity and other mental disorders (excluding of course mental defect) are only handed down to the extent of a similar predisposition.

A psychopathic heredity, i.e. one in which there is a history of mental trouble or allied conditions; is certainly to be taken note of and treated with some respect; but if the child of such parents were, in view of his heredity, given the ideal emotional environment and completely wise handling in the formative years, he could grow into a normal, well-balanced person. Unfortunately, parents who are themselves not well adjusted are likely to provide the wrong background for their offspring, with the result that they grow up to repeat many of the parental mistakes.

The children of parents who, at the time of conception and pregnancy, are themselves unfit by



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reason of age, physical illness or mental strain, are certainly likely to start with a handicap in the race of life. Essentials of their parental endowment may be lacking, and many of those, who all through life are dogged by mental disabilities, will be found to have had a bad start.

In the main, however, neurotics are made, not born; and, if we are to understand the causation of breakdown, we have got to look closely at those early years of life, in which the child was forming his impressions and attitudes. Here, in the nursery period, we shall most usually find the root of the trouble. The attempts of parents and nurses to mould and shape the child, so as to fit in with their own picture of what he should be like, result in the warping of his development. His freedom of growth is inhibited and he either submits with docility and loses his personality, or rebels (then or later) with equally disastrous results. Failure to understand the child and the perfectly logical processes which are going on in his mind will lead to futile or harmful attempts at discipline from his elders, which make impossible the attainment of that internal self-discipline which alone is of much value. Parents will often bring their children to a doctor saying, with an air of something approaching pride, that they are highly strung and sensitive, as though this were some mild evidence of a super-normal intelligence rather than an admission that, through faults in upbringing, the child has developed these embryonic symptoms of neurosis. The problems of childhood will be discussed at some length later, but we need at this point to recognize

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the fact that the warpings of early development are the most important factors in later mental breakdown. The child develops wrong ideas of itself and its relation to society, which make for difficulty in adjustment as it grows up. Its ideas of itself will be in conflict with the hard facts of reality, and, unless a solution of this conflict can be found, breakdown will result.

Unsolved emotional conflicts are at the root of all the psychological difficulties which lead to neurosis. We all know the worry and strain which may result from two perfectly conscious desires, as for example when we want equally to be in two places at one and the same time. We are not likely however, to break down over any conflict that is perfectly conscious, unless there be some additional factor, such as a toxæmia, playing a part. Most neurotic conflict is partially or wholly unconscious, and cannot therefore be met or solved. All that the sufferer does is to feel the strain and stand it, or find a way out through breakdown and the development of neurotic symptoms.

The unmarried, or unhappily married, woman, whose longing for love and attention is repressed because of her conscious ideal of herself as a strong-minded and capable woman—her pride, in fact—may develop anxiety as the result of this repression. The desire may express itself in a roundabout way by the development of all sorts of minor ailments and distressing physical symptoms. These justify her in taking great care of herself, and are likely to evoke the care and sympathy of relations, doctors and nurses. In this way, without any sacrifice of her self-

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esteem, she gets a substitute for that love which she feels to be her right. This frequently occurs, even though her invalidism means that great suffering will have to be borne, and many other ambitions placed on the scrap heap. It is a curious fact that desires of this kind are often so strong that for the blind attainment of what, could we only see it, is a relatively futile goal we will go through a welter of suffering. We may take one more example here to illustrate the causation of breakdown. The youngest son of a family is clever and attractive and for these reasons is spoiled. His success and adulation are taken for granted; he is the 'little prince' and these things are his rights. He may go through school life with comparatively slight shocks to this phantasy of himself, and perhaps he manages by rationalization and other unconscious devices to cushion himself against these blows. Arriving at physical manhood and a job in life, he comes at last to a failure of some sort or another, which cannot be explained away however hard he tries. His phantasy of his own importance is unconscious, and cannot be reconciled with the conscious failure. They are incompatible, and, since the failure cannot be wiped out or accepted as a part of normal experience, his adjustment breaks down, and he may swing over to great depression and morbid self-reproach. The adjustment to life which he had made was unsound, because it was based on a false idea of himself. If such a man can survive the crash, and, picking himself up, learn to revalue things more accurately, it will be a good thing for him to have had his breakdown.

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It is not easy at first sight to grasp the conception of the factor of conflict lying behind all mental breakdown, and often it is difficult to point out in any given instance exactly where the conflict has arisen. But, in the main, it is the true explanation of the phenomena which we are considering in this chapter, and, as there will be many further instances to help the reader in his grasp of matters, we can now look for a while at the methods of cure which can be attempted in illnesses of this type.

Peace of mind, and efficiency in the use of our mental powers, may be said to be the goal at which we aim, and in a breakdown there must obviously be many methods of helping towards cure. We are all unique, and even two persons with symptoms which are apparently identical may need quite different lines of treatment, because they themselves differ in temperament and circumstance, and also because the causative factors are never quite the same. Attempts to bring about an increased restfulness of mind by means of drugs, particularly potassium bromide, have for many years been the most popular line of treatment, and there is a certain field of usefulness for sedatives where there is over-anxiety. The symptom is however an indication of the underlying cause which needs treatment, and as such is valuable, so that its removal is not always desirable. Artificially induced restfulness may give the mind the chance it needs to settle down to better perspective and clearer thinking, and the same is true of rest cures which, though they are somewhat out of date, still serve an admirable purpose for some

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people. The problems which daunt us while in the grip of a busy routine life seem much more understandable and capable of solution on the third day of our holiday. We have given our bodies and our minds the rest they needed, and, still more important, we have broken through the mechanism of life, and so liberated much of the energy which had been taken up in driving the great wheel of routine. The result is that we can now put out our energies in a much freer and more effective manner towards the solving of our difficulties.

The more positive lines of attack on these mental conditions may be grouped under three headings, Physical, Environmental and Psychological.

The physical methods need not be enlarged on here to any great extent, since they are in the province of the doctor, for whom this book is not primarily intended. They consist in the ordinary investigation and therapy of general medicine, and are designed to produce that much-to-be-desired physical health. Special emphasis is placed on the discovery and elimination of toxic states due to general or local infective processes, the importance of which can hardly be over estimated, and on the malfunctions of the endocrine glands, which play so considerable a part in conditioning mental troubles. To these special considerations should be added the control of sleep by physical methods and by drugs. Of all the many symptoms which may result from a neurosis, insomnia is one of the few which is worth treating as a symptom. Usually it is wiser to ignore a symptom and attempt to get at the cause direct, but

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sleeplessness may so interfere with efficient thinking in the daytime as to make it impossible to do this, and it is therefore better to treat it. Normally we go to bed for the purpose of rest and sleep, able to leave behind us the work and anxieties of the day, which are to be taken up again in the morning. The sufferer from a neurosis is often unable to do this, for the anxieties cannot be adequately recognized or dealt with, and his state of mental unrest prevents sleep. To this difficulty is often added the 'bogey' of insomnia. He tosses about restlessly, pictures everyone else asleep and his own the only waking, tortured mind. Old wives' fables of insanity as the result of not sleeping come to him, and the more he tries to sleep, the greater the number of sheep he counts, the more wideawake he becomes. Baudouin's 'law of reversed effort' that the more we demand something of ourselves the less can we achieve it comes in here. That is to say that an over-anxious struggle with ourselves to reach a certain standard will result in inhibition; as when we try to remember someone's name and can only do so after we have ceased to try.

In actual fact there is very little difference between the value of quiet physical and mental rest in bed, in a state of relaxation, and the condition of unconsciousness which we call sleep. Our efficiency for work on the following day is practically as great under the former condition as under the latter; and could people who suffer from insomnia but realize this fact, some of the terror of their bogey would be gone. There are many physical measures which help to

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bring about sleep, for example bodily relaxation, food, or hot drinks, exercise, warmth in bed, and, in fact, anything which helps to bring blood to some part of the body other than the brain. To get mental inactivity we need a degree of cerebral anæmia; that is one of the principles to have in mind. When physical measures fail, we should, in many cases, employ drugs to help with sleep, and here comes in another bogey, the fear of a drug habit. The patient who is making no effort to understand and solve his mental conflicts, but is 'throwing up the sponge', merely looks forward to drugs as the means of giving him some short respite from his trouble. He becomes dependent upon them and may easily develop a habit. On the other hand, those who are determined to do all in their power to meet their challenges, and make a better adjustment, and who recognize that artificially induced rest can, through the temporary respite, make them fitter to carry on, are in no danger of a habit. To them drugs are a means to an end, not an end in themselves, and certainly not a magical solution.

Environment plays a not inconsiderable part in the bringing about of breakdown. The round hole can, and should, sometimes be modified for the peg, but it is wise to decide at the outset which line of treatment is to be the main one, alteration of circumstance, or adaptation of the individual. To decide upon the relative importance of these two makes for clarity of thought and consistency, whether we ourselves are under consideration or someone else. A modified environment, such as is brought about by

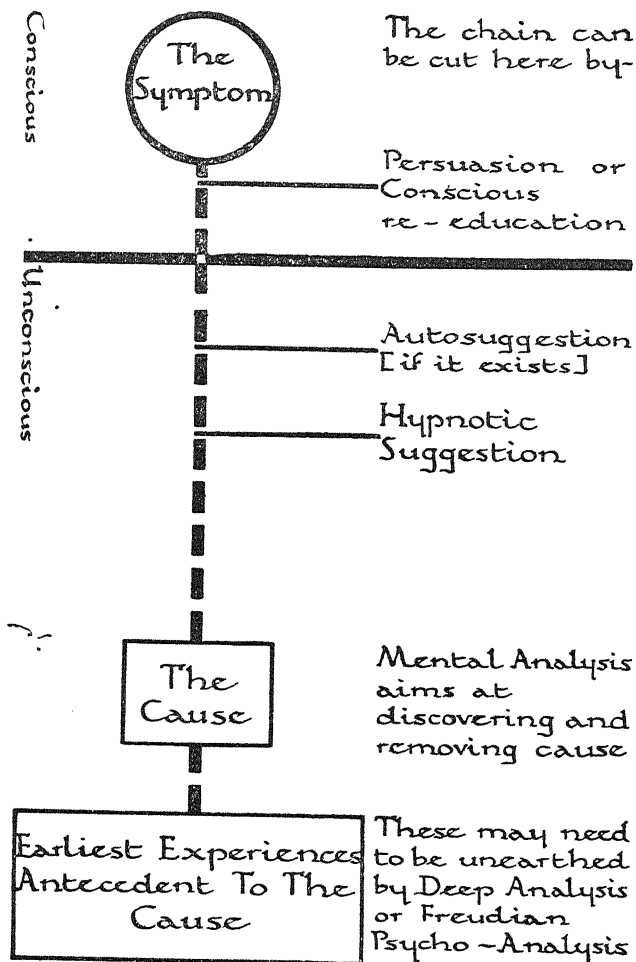
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a holiday, a nursing home or a change of occupation, may do much towards allowing the patient to recover. Usually he has then to face the matter of his own adaptation to circumstance, if he is to be fit for any of the difficulties of life.

This new attitude towards himself and his problems may slowly evolve and shape itself unconsciously out of his experience of life, or it may be necessary, and is usually quicker and more satisfactory, that he should make it evolve by some form of psychological treatment.

This diagram indicates the rôle of various methods of psychological attack. The conscious symptom which is complained of may take many forms. It may be a worry, an obsessional habit of mind, a physical pain, or a phobia. Whatever it may be, we assume that the mental conflict which causes it is unconscious; and we further assume that the persistence of the cause keeps up the symptom, or, to put it as in the diagram, there is a chain holding one to the other; we may cut this chain at various levels if we want to get rid of the symptom. We can begin by a perfectly conscious process of reasoning and persuasion, which, in some cases, will suffice to get rid of the actual symptoms complained of. Going deeper, we may use what is called auto-suggestion, which goes just below the level of ordinary conscious processes, or we may go yet further down and produce a surer effect by hypnotic suggestion (hetero-suggestion), and by any of these methods we may bring about relief from the symptom. For some people this is all that is needed, and, freed from their symptom,





*Diagram indicating the role of various methods of psychological attack.*

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they can make an adequate adjustment to the life they have to live. In all these methods, however the real cause of the trouble is left undiscovered and untouched, and often it will give rise to some alternative symptom or to a recurrence of the original difficulty. Most often, therefore, medical psychologists try to get down to the root of the trouble in order to eradicate it, and for this some form of mental analysis is needed, while occasionally it is necessary to go back by deep analysis (or the Freudian technique of Psycho-analysis) to explore the emotional life in the earliest stages, long antecedent to the actual causative conflict. Without such explanation and consequent insight, it may not be possible to resolve the conflicts which have arisen at later stages of development. Let us look in some slight detail at these different modes of attack.

*Persuasion* is a method familiar to everyone in the ordinary affairs of life. If arguments can be produced and arranged with sufficient skill, a sense of conviction can be brought about, and this very usual and logical proceeding has been elaborated into a therapeutic method by which certain symptoms, which appear to be, or actually are irrational, can be removed. The man who is over-anxious about his financial affairs may, by calm and clear demonstration, be convinced of his financial security, and get ease of mind. The man with a functional aphonia (loss of voice) may, even by such a simple procedure as a slap on the back, which being unexpected produces an expletive, be convinced that his voice is still there, and that he can use it. The

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same result may be obtained by more elaborate and generally successful methods. Having then for the moment removed the symptom, what next? In most of these cases there is some deeper reason than meets the casual glance why the one man has his anxiety and the other takes refuge in voicelessness. The cause is still untouched and likely, almost certain, to re-emerge in a new symptom.

In the war the method of persuasion was practised on a large scale with much apparent success, but since the war it has been realized that the majority of the severer cases, which had been handled in this way, relapsed. The method has, in fact, a very limited usefulness when we are dealing with an established neurosis.

*Suggestion* is a method known to all in its elementary forms. Our suggestibility is our capacity to accept an idea or statement without there being a sufficient rational basis for such acceptance. The child is almost completely suggestible, that is to say it has so little experience by which to judge of the truth or falsity of statements that it will believe that black is called white, if the idea is given to it by someone it likes. Manifestly this habit of accepting suggestion is unsuitable for adult life, when self-reliance and critical power should have been developed. Obviously however, we all still retain a large measure of childish suggestibility, for otherwise there would be less successful advertising! If we are told sufficiently often and persuasively, and at suitable times, when we are tired and more receptive to suggestion, that we should 'Get it at ——'s' there is every likelihood that we

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shall do so. The fact that we have done so, with whatever results, will in itself be a suggestion to our friends, who may follow suit, and so it goes on. This is a normal tendency, and we must realize that use can be made of this receptivity to suggestion for therapeutic purposes. The British Pharmacopœia has always contained a pill made of brown bread, which doubtless has helped many and many a sufferer in the past, just as coloured water has brought about cure—and it really is a cure, but by psychological instead of physical means. In treatment by suggestion it is recognized that, if the conscious attention and critical faculty can be diverted by some means or other, a suggestion which may be quite irrational can be accepted by the non-critical part of one's mind, and can take effect. It is when one's attention is riveted in a conversation, for example, that someone's yawn on the other side of the room acts as a suggestion, and produces the sense of fatigue and the desire to yawn oneself. Monotonous sounds which fix the attention, e.g. someone reading, are also soporific. The suspension of criticism will increase the effect of the suggestion, though, even if one is critical and on the defensive, an oft-repeated and convincingly conveyed suggestion will take some effect. The confidence and cheerfulness of the doctor is a potent factor in cure; the tone of voice in which you give commands or suggestions to your children will largely determine the result produced; and the suggestion of your personality and your life will be a still stronger influence. Suggestions such as these, given either consciously or unconsciously, are of

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great value, and with children one can often do useful work in cases of bad habits of various kinds. This can be achieved by making sensible and positive suggestions to the child in the voice which it most appreciates and respects; such suggestions should be made without undue emphasis, just after it has gone to sleep, when the ideas will be received and recorded without resistance or reasoning.

*Auto-suggestion* is the name which Emil Coué gave to the process of making suggestions to oneself. The method has been known and used for long years, but the little French 'pharmacien', with his magical personality, brought it to public notice in an extraordinary way, and systematized it to a degree unknown up to that time. It is doubtful whether, in reality, the process is one of *auto-suggestion*, but, as was hinted in an earlier chapter, it would appear likely that it depends for its value on the *hetero-suggestions* (those made by someone other than oneself) conveyed by the personality or the writings of Coué or his followers. The name, however, can usefully be kept to describe the particular method, which consists of the monotonous, unhurried repetition of a positive idea in a formula such as 'ça passe' (the formula Coué used for headaches and similar disabilities), with the possible addition of a magic rosary of knots on a string. The method can be proved by anyone who cares to try, and will be found to produce a quite definite effect, provided that there be an open mind with no intruding scepticism or desire to find it untrue. As you sit now by a table, place your hand quite flat and firmly on the table. Start then repeat-

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ing monotonously and without emphasis, 'I can't remove my hand, I can't remove my hand . . .' not allowing time for rational ideas to come into consciousness in between the statements. You will assuredly become aware of a sense of powerlessness to move your perfectly normal hand until finally you say, or have the idea: 'I can remove it.' There are other similar simple experiments one can make and for many folk there is value in such a method, provided that they understand its limitations, and that they make sensible, positive suggestions.

*Hetero-suggestion* is that given by someone else, either in a state of deliberate relaxation on the part of the recipient, or in a condition of hypnosis—itself a state induced by suggestion. Here we are dealing with a psychotherapeutic method of very great value, which ought only to be employed by experienced and trustworthy doctors. Not only can many functional symptoms be removed completely, but many organic conditions can be temporarily alleviated, and perhaps more permanently benefited.

In the neuroses or mental breakdowns, the question of treatment by hypnotic suggestion has to be decided on the merits of the individual case. For those who are too young, or those who are too old, to use their own critical faculties in extricating themselves from their psychological difficulties, and for those who have insufficient grey matter, suggestion is probably the best method. Since, however, these disorders are usually due to persistent infantile character traits, there is a likelihood that by 'having it done for them'—the magical solution—patients

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may become yet more childish and dependent, so that, even though symptoms are relieved, the ultimate gain is little. Moreover, as has been pointed out above, although there may be a fairly complete removal of the symptom, the cause is left untouched, and this from the medical, or the common-sense point of view is not very sound. The patient who comes to a doctor complaining of a severe pain in the lower right abdomen may be sent to bed cheerful and free from his pain as the result of drugs, but that will be small consolation to his relatives if his inflamed appendix, the cause of the pain, proves fatal next day. Persuasion and Suggestion alike are aiming chiefly at the removal of one particular symptom, but leave untouched many other effects of the cause which, perhaps indirectly, affect the character of the person concerned.

We come lastly, therefore, to the question of *Mental Analysis*, and it must of course be understood that, while this is in theory the most rational of all methods for dealing with neurotic disorders, it is no more a panacea than is any other method of medicine, and it presents a very great number of difficult problems. Analysis is an attempt to hold up a psychological mirror to a patient in which he may see himself as he really is, robbed of his disguises and his sophistries, so that, looking, he may see the true nature of the problems which have, up to that time, defeated him. Having thus seen what is wrong, it then behoves him to take action and produce a new state of affairs, for otherwise it is of no advantage to have seen himself.

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A chemical analysis is an attempt to discover the nature of a substance or the component parts of a mixture. This is accomplished by trial and experiment, and painstaking critical observation. All this can be said of mental analysis, but the analyst can only work on material produced by the patient. His eyes may provide him with some of the necessary evidence, but the inner content of anyone's mind can only be got at through close and intelligent co-operation with the analyst. It will mean a considerable amount of work which will demand time, dependent on the severity of the trouble and the complication of the problems, as well as on the personality of the patient. For the majority of breakdowns, analytical treatment (say an hour on three or four days a week) may last from two to four months, sometimes less, and often more.

A Freudian psycho-analysis, which aims at a higher standard of cure and so always goes back much further, may take two years work or longer. A great many psychotherapists would feel, however, that this type and degree of analysis was but rarely needed by the patients they see, though undoubtedly there are cases for which the labour and expense involved are amply justified.

A mental analysis will usually start with a very full history-taking, and a detailed survey of all the conscious material in the patient's mind, which has direct, or indirect, bearing on the genesis of his trouble and his present-day handling of it. Conscious memories from early days will generally be of value; and it is often interesting to see how, as Adler has



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pointed out, the very earliest recollections that we have of ourselves may throw light on the general after-development and character formations. From the study of this material not only can the analyst deduce much about his patient, and the nature of the disorder and consequent problems, but the patient himself will begin to sort and arrange things. Thus, in bringing a somewhat more detached and critical point of view to bear on the facts of his life and the reactions he has made to them, he will begin to get a better knowledge of himself than he has hitherto had. Confession in the religious sense goes nearly as far as this, and even at this stage the 'soul' may find it 'good'; and there will often be great relief in unburdening one's mind, perhaps more fully than ever before, to someone who is understanding, and who can at the same time be friendly and critical. A degree of self-knowledge will be gained by this full, conscious self-revelation. Analysis in the real sense only begins here, where it is necessary to pass from the arrangement of conscious material to the revealing of unconscious, or semi-conscious, factors. Because they are unconscious, the patient cannot relate these things or admit to his motives, therefore the methods which Freud has elaborated come into use. These are Free Association and Dream Interpretation. Most of us have played the game of 'associations' at Christmas parties, letting our minds produce any idea they like in association with the last idea produced by someone else, irrespective of whether or no it makes sense, i.e. irrespective of criticism, or without editing or censorship. We also

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know to what tricks of association our minds are liable; how the scent of a particular flower takes us suddenly back twenty or forty years to a particular garden, and a scene rises up into consciousness with pleasant or poignant memories. The whole affair had been out of consciousness for that intervening time and is suddenly revived. This then is the method of free association. If we can think aloud, not considering what we say, whether the matter is relevant or no, sensible or the reverse, fact or phantasy; if we can take off the carefully developed reserves and inhibitions, and let our minds take us where they will, with someone else (the analyst) to collect and collate and edit afterwards for us; then, by this process of free association, we can get below the level of ordinary consciousness to thoughts and feelings and motives which have not been accessible to us before, and in this way we can learn more about the mental mechanisms we need to study. Ideally the interpretation of the material thus produced should be mainly carried out by the patient, because it is only by a *realization* for ourselves of matters such as these that a satisfactory liberation of interest from old useless objects and methods of thought can be achieved. The realization and acceptance of the true nature of our difficulties helps us towards a solution. The symptom, which was a false attempt at solution, in most cases disappears and gradually (sometimes suddenly) cure is brought about. A revaluation of feelings and experiences and a redistribution of interest or 'libido' are the chief factors concerned. It is not easy to give a very clear picture, in a

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compressed form such as this chapter demands, of the process of cure through analysis, but some idea may be gained by one or two brief illustrations. The man who lives in an acute state of anxiety, which fastens itself on to any trivial circumstance, may, in an analysis of his symptom, find that it traces back to a childish episode of fear, where he reacted by running to his mother. Here he found himself delightfully safe, so much so that it may even have become rather satisfactory to feel fear sometimes after this, in order to have the pleasure of feeling 'safe' with mother. Living through these memories and feelings again, there comes to him the realization that throughout his life he has been re-enacting these childish scenes, and that his obsessing fear has resulted from his wrong attitude in demanding 'safety first'. As he makes the mechanism conscious to himself, it comes within his power to control, and his adult reasoning self begins to develop along the lines of a wise adventurousness, which brings relief from his symptom. Unless he sees for himself what has happened, it is of little good to urge him on to adventure, which in fact is more likely to add to the strain of his life and increase his symptoms.

An actual instance of free association may be quoted. Towards the end of a short analysis a patient mentioned that he had a curious desire to kick dogs whenever he saw them. The analyst told him to lie on the couch and relate everything that came into his mind, starting with a mental picture of himself kicking a dog, and accordingly the patient produced the following: a picture of himself running away

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from a dog—crossing the road to avoid gateways where dogs might come out—jumping and even running from barking dogs, in general the sense of fear of dogs. Then came pictures of other fears, of the war, of being hurt in various ways, of football, phantasies of brave acts, in the present and past. A picture emerged of himself as a schoolboy, being dared to walk along a high wall, and, terrified, doing it to accomplish more than had been suggested, just in order to prove to his challengers and also to himself that he was not afraid. After many other old memories of a similar kind had come up, there came a picture which he thought was purely imaginary, of a small boy of three (himself) being challenged by two elder brothers (five and seven) to jump over a rope which they held; he ran, but funkcd, though it was only nine or twelve inches from the ground; they chorused: ‘cowardy, cowardy custard’ and he felt terribly ashamed. Here then, if we interpret it correctly, is a most interesting analysis of the symptom. If we start from childhood we see a small boy, who quite naturally feels fear of a new and difficult experience (it was afterwards proved to be substantially true); his older brothers, to whom he looks up, accuse him of cowardice and he is ashamed. The idea comes to him that fear is wrong and a despicable trait which he should not have, that is to say he confuses fear and cowardice, not recognizing that the former is a universal and normal reaction to anything which challenges our instinct of self-preservation. This is the beginning of the trouble, for he represses fear, and we see him getting an increased

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occurrence of it in consequence, with unconscious compensatory courage and rashness, designed to keep fear hidden from himself and others. From here it is not difficult to pass to his later symptom, and to see that, in his annoyance with himself for his fear of the ordinary household dog, he must not only do something brave, but also he wishes to revenge himself to the extent of bullying the animal. Here was the reason for the symptom, and, as the patient got insight into its true nature, he made the unconscious conflict over cowardice conscious, was able easily to readjust his views on a rational basis, and no longer had any reason to be ashamed of fear, nor any further cause to prove his valour. The desire to kick dogs left him and has never returned.

I have set this out at some length because it provides a simple and clear instance of a free-association analysis. Needless to say the symptoms met with vary very greatly, and are generally much more serious, and decidedly more complicated than the one above; but the method by which they are handled is the same. It is found that in the analysis of any symptom one has usually to go back to those formative years of childhood, the period before seven, for some part of the necessary evidence, and not infrequently it is essential to get back by deep analysis to infantile memories and emotional reactions.

Dream interpretation furnishes another line of approach to the unconscious part of the mind, though it is by no means an easy one and certainly it is not fool proof. We dream all night long, so far as we know, and it is assumed by some that a function of

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dreams is to save our sleep. If we continued our conscious waking thinking, we should not go to sleep, so our minds go on working, but the thoughts are presented in dream form, disguised in parable or symbolism, with the result that they do not, as a rule, disturb us and we are able to go on sleeping. It is mainly in the early morning, when we are not so deeply asleep, that dreams get through into consciousness sufficiently clearly to be remembered on waking. If we have indigestion, or some other condition which interferes with sleep, we shall remember our dreams more easily; while, if we have a pain of some sort, our dream may take on a painful character and even become a nightmare—the nightmare that we all associate with indiscretions of diet.

The dream is then a presentation of our uncensored and usually unconscious thought in parable form; or perhaps it is best thought of as a cartoon of which there are two parts, the manifest content, or apparent subject matter, and the latent content, or real meaning. The political cartoonist will take as the manifest content of his picture some topical event, a football match, or a ceremonial. Our minds will take present-day topics, or subjects of which we have been reading or talking, or perhaps outstanding past experiences, as the apparent subject of the dream. When you look into the cartoon, and understand that the figures in it, the location of these figures, and the things they are doing have all got a symbolic meaning, you begin to see what is the true value, or the latent content, of the picture, and you realize what the cartoonist means to convey to you as his

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conception of the political situation. The parallel holds, for this also is what the dream is doing; and if one has the wit and the patience to unravel the symbolism, which is often very involved, it is possible to see meaning behind the majority of dreams which are at all completely remembered.

So far as we know the dream is never prophetic in the sense of foretelling events, but it may sometimes appear to be so by coincidence, and more often because it puts into a concrete form our intuitive guesses as to what is likely to happen in situations that especially interest us. We may not have focused our ideas into words, but we may do so in sleep.

Some dreams are simple, and easy to understand, either as wish-fulfilments or as a representation of our actual situation; while others are exceedingly complex and frequently are too difficult to unravel. ~~It is not~~ usually possible to interpret a political cartoon unless one knows something of the political situation of the moment; and similarly with dreams, little can be made of most of them unless we know something about the dreamer, and what the various figures or incidents in the dream picture mean to him. Granted sufficient mental agility, it is possible to make a dream mean almost anything, and that is of course a danger to be guarded against. A true interpretation of a dream, however disconcerting it may be, will usually 'click' into place in the dreamer's conscious mind and be recognized as essentially true. The public speaker who dreams of himself as a parrot in a cage, once he has overcome his reluctance to see that the dream is being critical

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of himself, will not find it hard to discover the real meaning in his mechanical and repetitive habit of mind, and the limitation of spiritual and intellectual freedom from which he suffers. The woman who fears the responsibility of adult life may dream constantly that she is trying to climb back into her cot, i.e. to the position of irresponsible infancy. The successful business man or publicist who has an over-belief in himself and his infallibility will be kept reminded of the truth, that he is in fact fallible, by dreams of falling from heights, missing trains, and other failure dreams of various kinds.

Enough has been said for the general descriptive purpose of this chapter, and the reader will have begun to catch a glimpse of the method and value of dream interpretation (with, we hope, a healthy idea of its limitations also) which will be reinforced by instances in the chapters which follow. ~~Our own~~ dreams provide the best starting point for study of the subject, and are much more wisely tackled than those of our friends. If we can be observant and open-minded, we shall see in them from time to time, as also in our phantasies or day-dreams, which are very similar though the symbolism is usually less complicated, many useful statements of our attitude to ourselves and our affairs. Though sometimes these dreams, and our self-observation along other lines, will be devastating to our self-esteem, they will, if sanely regarded and studied, inevitably take us nearer to the truth.

In concluding this chapter, it should be re-emphasized that the cause of mental breakdown or



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neurosis is practically always an emotional conflict, although that conflict may only assume a serious aspect by reason of physical conditions, which, if they are discovered, can often be remedied. Wide vision, that can see the physical and the psychological factors is needed; and the treatment of any particular case, must of necessity be guided by the individual circumstances and needs of that case. There cannot be mass production, or a stock method of repair.

Psychotherapeutic treatment of some kind or another is always of use; and though mental analysis is not a *sine qua non*, for many cases, in some form or another it provides the surest and most radical method of treatment, because it aims at removing the cause.

The results of treatment by psychological means have been carefully assessed in large groups of patients. Following up these patients for a number of years after discharge, both Luff and Garrod from the Institute of Medical Psychology and Ross from the Cassel Hospital find that 50-55 per cent are permanently relieved or 'cured'. This is a very satisfactory proportion, as compared with other types of illness of similar severity and duration.

The dangers of mental analysis are there, for every method of medical and surgical treatment has its risks. The skill, carefulness and experience of the medical psychologist are the greatest safeguards we have.

## *Chapter VII*

# The Problems of Early Life

In this and the succeeding chapters, an attempt is made to gather together some of the outstanding difficulties that are common to most people. Clearly it is not possible to make an inclusive survey, or even to deal adequately with a great number of these questions, within the limits of a book of this type and size. The writer's purpose will have been served, however, if the perusal of them sets the reader questioning himself, and if in consequence he gains some new idea of the variety and complexity of the psychological problems with which life faces us. Prevention of maladjustment is the most important part of mental hygiene, but we cannot prevent it unless we are forewarned of those things which are likely to occur, and have receptive minds and open eyes willing to see the difficulties in the development of our children, or in our own personal emotional lives.

The first seven years are probably the most important period of all life from the point of view of character development, for the child is never again quite so receptive of ideas and outside impressions.

## The Problems of Early Life

No one who has lived with a small child, and watched it grow from inarticulate babyhood into being a little personality, unique and intensely progressive in every department of its physical and mental life, can be anything but rather awed by the responsibility that is thrown on its elders. It is their task to provide just the right environment and influences, so that the evolving being shall have the best chance to grow to what is best for it, and shall not be warped. Parenthood is certainly a whole-time job, and try we never so hard it is impossible to avoid mistakes, and we must struggle on to do the best we can. Those who have children will certainly find many criticisms of their handling suggested by reading these pages; and those who have no children are bound, on reviewing their own lives and development, to see many things which might have been much better arranged, and circumstances which, had they been understood more clearly, would have made a great difference to their lives. The difficulties of children are most often the outcome of the parents' mistakes; and yet, while we should feel free to be critical of our forbears or of ourselves, we should not sit in judgment or blame, for they and we have in nearly every instance been doing the best we knew. There has not often been a failure in effort, but rather one of knowledge, and that with its consequences is, to some extent, alterable.

The child's readiness to accept the suggestions which we make to it, either consciously or unconsciously, constitutes one of the difficult problems of these early days. Suggestibility has been defined in

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an earlier chapter as the tendency to accept suggestions without a sufficient basis of reason for them. It is not only the things we say to children that are taken in this way, but also the way in which we say them, the things we do with them or with others, and, perhaps most important of all, the things we say or imply about them in speaking to others in their hearing. When a friend tells us that he thinks we are very clever, or in some way wonderful, it has very little effect on us, save that we suspect he is going to ask us for money, or service of some sort. If, however, in the course of our ordinary life we casually overhear this friend making the same remark to a third person, when we are not supposed to be listening, quite a different result is achieved. We tend to believe the compliment, and our self-esteem is raised in consequence. This is still more true of the child, and there are few of us who cannot look back to experiences of this kind, which helped to shape our ideas materially.

The tendency to accept suggestion depends upon various factors both in the person suggesting and in the recipient. The more intelligent and critically minded we are, the less likelihood is there of our accepting suggestions which are irrational; while the prestige with which we endow the person who makes the statement, our fondness for them, our lack of organized knowledge of the subject in comparison with theirs, our ill-health or fatigue are all likely to increase our suggestibility. The small child will believe almost anything told it by someone it loves; and this is scarcely strange because it has no experi-

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ence of life, and no standards by which to judge for itself. Quite rightly we make use of this suggestible state in the early stages of the child's education. Habit training, whether in the physical or mental sphere, is best accomplished in this way, and, although we often fail to recognize the fact, the majority of our early teaching is on a basis of suggestion. It is no doubt very gratifying to have one's child believe all that one says, and accept one's suggestions as to their conduct without any question or argument. 'Father must be right', or 'Mother always knows best'; but we must ask ourselves what is likely to become of the child, who is encouraged to go on for any length of time with this mental approach to life. There must inevitably be a degree of dependence and a pathological suggestibility, which will rob the growing man (or woman) of that independence and self-reliance which is his birthright. Lacking this he can only go with the majority and believe that, if the daily paper that has the largest circulation, or the journal to which his parents subscribed, says a thing is so, then it is so. That way lies individual and racial degeneracy. The child has a mind of its own, and we fail if we do not give it the opportunities it needs for exercising that mind, and the chance of cutting its mental teeth on the problems of its little life. Our suggestions should from the earliest days always be such that we could substantiate them; but, as the child grows up to the enquiring state of mind at about three or four, we have need to give our reasons more and more and to be less dogmatic. We cannot hope to make the reason for everything plain

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to the child, and he will have to learn to accept certain statements on trust, without discussion; but there will be little difficulty about this if in general he is met by a reasoned attitude and finds encouragement in thinking out for himself the why and wherefore of social conduct.

Suggestions which we give to children should always be positive in character. If we can invite the child who is scribbling on the wall-paper, to draw a picture or play a pencil game or *do* something else rather than make a prohibition or negative suggestion, we are more likely to build up a happy disposition in the child, because it has thus a positive outlet for its activity. Then, if we suggest further that with a piece of india-rubber we can have a nice clean wall-paper and 'won't that be nice?', another milestone is passed. It may be laid down as a fundamental principle that we should always say 'do' and never say 'don't', although to live up to this is often hard.

In religious and moral teaching, it is especially important that we should bear in mind the danger of imposing on the child, at its impressionable age, fixed standards which, though they may be right for us, may not be so for the child as it grows up, and may hamper and hold back its growth to freedom and an individual view-point later on. The problem is soluble if we can give large, positive concepts of important matters to children—ideas of God, love, honour, service to one's neighbour and social responsibility—and put the more definite, or dogmatic interpretations of these, which appeal to us, in the

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light of personal views which will serve them for a while. We should let them see that we want them, as they grow up, to think out for themselves these fundamentals, and their application to modern life. In ordinary education in schools this principle is becoming increasingly recognized. The wisest developments in modern schemes of education, are the attempts to break away from the harmful suggestions of a belief in the importance of results, and from the exaggerated competition that ensues. Many of us, who feel we have no real knowledge of some subject we were taught at school, may find the reason to lie in the method of teaching, the suggestion having been that results mattered most, and that to attain them there was one mechanical way. Hence we were never able to understand the fundamentals, and consequently all that followed was unintelligible.

From the problems which the child's suggestibility raises, we pass on very naturally to the allied questions of its relation to authority. We cannot live for long without becoming aware that there are authority-figures of various kinds, who say that we shall, or shall not, do certain things. The child's nurse and his mother are early authority figures, but very likely the father may be the one who stands out most clearly. Incidentally, the child's first concept of God will usually be based on his male parent. These relationships, and much of the future ease or difficulty in adjusting to authority in life, will depend on whether or no authority is presented in a reasonable light. If it is so presented, it will be accepted in an equally reasonable spirit; for every child is logical,

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and it is only wrong handling or illness that makes him unreasonable. The enforcing of irrational authority can only have one of two results; it may be accepted so that the child grows up into a 'good' boy who always does what he is told, who goes with the majority, is orthodox in every way, and has no personality of his own; or he will rebel against it and become a rebel type in later life, voting automatically for 'the opposition', the champion of lost causes, an anti-everything. Both of these results are regrettable, for by neither of these methods is the man likely to get near the truth. We should respect and pity the small child who, suffering from the sense of the unreasonableness of the demands made on him, expresses his healthy spirit in rebelling and in doing the opposite of what he has been told to do. It is not he that is at fault, but some elder who probably has been too self-important in his demands.

Examples of these two types of reaction may be given. A married woman, of some thirty years of age, had great difficulty in making her own decisions, or even in thinking her own thoughts. She had a constant guilt sense when she obeyed her own impulses. In the course of investigation, it appeared that she had been brought up in a strict home, with a patriarchal father who had taught and insisted on the doctrine of implicit obedience, so rarely conformed to by any one of those who insist on it in their children. His children had been nurtured on the story of the signalman's little daughter who, taking her father's dinner to the box one day, was standing in the middle of the track when the express



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thundered round the bend. Her distraught father shouted to her to lie down, and she, being thoroughly obedient, did so, with the result that she escaped unhurt! The generalization from this kind of moral had been the patient's undoing, for it had robbed her of the ability to think for herself. On the other hand, a middle-aged man, with an intensely unhappy family life, who was of the most complete rebel type in every way, and especially in the political world, found on analyzing out his feelings, that the trouble went back to early childhood, when he had rebelled against the rather unctuous and unreasoning authority of his father. The rebel tendency had been so strong and compulsive that, as a youth, his father being a very strong anti-Romanist, the son had felt compelled to become a Roman Catholic monk, that is to say the antithesis of what his father wished. A rebel such as he could not long remain a member of a great system based upon authority like the Roman Church, and so he ceased to be a monk. Under treatment he recognized how, all through his life, he had been repeating the emotional reactions of childhood, seeing his father in every authority, whether social, political or religious, and making the same unreasonable rebellion, though quite unconsciously.

The question of authority is important too in matters of discipline. Although the ultimate goal to be aimed at with the child is his development of an internal self-discipline, it is necessary for many years that he shall have external standards set for, and demanded of, him; and deviations from these stan-

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dards have often to be met with punishment. If there is to be no resentment of punishment, and no rebellion against authority, it is essential that there shall not be a personal factor involved. The standpoint of social obligation is the one which the child can always understand and accept, and failure to live up to what society (as he understands it) has a right to demand will obviously be met by temporary social ostracism of some sort or another, the sentence being passed by an adult or an elder child as the representative of 'society'. To punish a child because he has not done what we told him to is very rarely wise. Sometimes also punishment may be accompanied by bad temper, the outcome of one's own injured self-importance, and then it is almost invariably unjust. It may inspire fear, but since it cannot evoke respect it is worse than useless. There are, of course, very many children so insensitive or so well adjusted that unjust punishment has little effect upon them; but there is a very large number in whom these episodes of early life rankle, and, even though forgotten after the lapse of time, leave emotional scars and a certain distortion of personality which need never have occurred. The child who is unjustly or unreasonably handled develops a logical sense of injustice and rebellion, which separates him in some degree from his fellows. In the child who has suffered gross injustice there may develop a curiously strong sense of his own importance and 'rightness'. He has such justification for considering himself unfairly treated in early life that, as he grows up, he writes down all criticism that is levelled at him as being unmerited.

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Thus obviously, he must come to feel that he is a very superior person, and beyond criticism. The conceit and 'touchiness' of certain people in adult life is the direct result of such treatment.

The spoilt child is a familiar figure to all of us, and probably there are not many readers of this book who will feel inclined towards intolerance or blame of the *enfant gâté*, of whatever age. In every case he has been sinned against; and while we may be able to help him, our righteous anger should be against those who, in his impressionable years, made the logically minded child into what he is when we see him.

There are many parents who will stoutly deny that they have spoilt their children in any way, for they only think of spoiling in terms of giving large and costly presents and other indulgences such as the child loves; but there are many other ways of spoiling, for the word covers most of those conditions which spoil the child's chance of living a normal life and making an ordinary adjustment. In the case of many children the process is begun in the first days or hours of life, for the tiny baby is quite able to grasp the idea of its own importance, which is produced in it by the magical effect of its voice. Nurses or parents who pick up a child from its cot when it cries (save of course if it has pain or hunger) are, in fact, laying the foundation stones of a sense of importance which may have to be modified later on with great difficulty. There are few babies who, if they have been allowed to cry once or twice without achieving the much desired result of being taken

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up and nursed, will not learn the lesson and accept the realities of life. This early realization that, although they are loved and cared for, they cannot control the situation by making a fuss, will react to their own mental and physical welfare as well as to that of their parents. Clearly such firmness needs to be backed up by great affection—so that there shall be no sense of a contest and defeat in the child's mind.

The first baby, the youngest, and the only child are in peculiarly dangerous positions, and it is with them that we need to be specially watchful. The only child will almost inevitably become spoilt by his feeling of the importance of the rôle he plays; he matters so much to his parents and to their friends, and is so often in the centre of the stage with no one else to supplant him and share the limelight. He may get so accustomed to this that the later years will bring much hardship. The delicate child, who by reason of his physical needs has to have extra care and attention, will inevitably be spoilt. Every one of us can recall how, even in adult convalescence, we have felt and behaved like spoilt children. The precocious child, who gets praise by reason of his intellectual or physical achievements, is in a similar plight; while it is obvious that the adoration of parents, grandparents and maternally disposed aunts must react similarly. These are merely samples of a very large number of situations which may arise in the early years and give cause for self-importance, and consequent trouble.

The child begins life as a completely ego-centric

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being; he has nothing but his own sensations and desires to guide him, and all his earliest contacts with his fellows are self-regarding in character; he only loves his mother because she feeds him. This position of omnipotent self-love must sustain many attacks and reverses in the course of his development, if he is to reach the ultimate adult goal of social adjustment. Every experience of early life which indulges his love for exhibitionism, his sense of too easy success, the ability to get from one parent what the other has refused, or indeed, any form of spoiling, must, of necessity, make the main adjustments of the child's life more difficult and sometimes impossible.

Life is so arranged for most of us that in the contacts of the nursery, kindergarten and school, we are able to readjust our early ideas of ourselves, and to come down without undue heartburning from our position of superiority and self-importance to the level of mediocrity in which we are able to see ourselves as one of the crowd. The truth is that we are all mediocre, good at some things and bad at others. We must accept this fact if we are to have peace of mind, though acceptance does not mean that we should be content with ourselves. There are always many directions in which effort towards achievement and advance will be worth while.

The spoilt child finds great difficulty in making this adjustment. He has been taught to regard himself as a little prince, and will continue to do so with many results that are as trying for him as for his friends. Outbursts of temper are an almost inevitable reaction to any thwarting of his desires, and sulking

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and self-pity are equally logical, for, if he is so important and so worth loving, it is clear that he should pity himself for the inability to have what he wants. The development of the team spirit in nursery play or in later school life is a necessary step towards the goal of social adaptation. For the 'little prince', however, this is exceptionally difficult. It demands a degree of self-effacement and willingness to be ignored, which is the antithesis of what he has been taught to believe is his right. The majority of those who in later life are individualists were forced into this rôle by the early treatment they received. They continue in adult life to think primarily of themselves as they did in childhood. They play individual games like golf or tennis, where they are out for themselves and a personal victory, rather than team games like football or hockey. If they do play these games, they fail to pass the ball because of their own anxiety to score goals.

It is of little use to blame or punish children who are like this. We can do nothing if our own self-importance leads us to irritation and impatience, however natural this may seem to be. They are suffering from a wrong set of values and consequent misdirection of energy. This is an illness in embryo, and what they need is that we should tolerate and understand them and then help them to understand themselves.

The shyness and sensitiveness of childhood passes on into the self-consciousness that is the bugbear of so many adults. The root of these troubles lies also in this sense of superiority, into which the child is

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led by his circumstances. Starting life on a pedestal, he has to pass on to the experiences of the world outside the nursery, where sooner or later he must necessarily meet failure. Other children will laugh at him, twist his arm, or ridicule the way he is clothed. He tries to do things and fails. Somehow people do not seem to recognize how special a person he is, and he cannot retain his earlier idea of himself. Were he, however, to give this up entirely, his self-esteem would suffer a sore blow. Therefore, what usually happens is that he retains at the back of his mind (i.e. unconsciously) a phantasy of his own superiority, while consciously he swings over to the opposite attitude, a feeling of inferiority. If he cannot be very wonderful and a great success, then he must be a great failure. Even a sense of inferiority is preferable to the acceptance of mediocrity, and it allows him to retain underneath his Uriah Heep attitude, this pleasant phantasy of what he really is like if only people knew! The superiority phantasy will sometimes appear to materialize when he achieves some success, but more often he has to guard it jealously against injury. Failure to play a game well will lead to apologies on his part, for he is falling below his idea of what he should do. Challenged by the need to stand in the public eye, he feels fear because he would like always to be taken at his phantasy valuation of himself rather than at his actual worth. His audience is not likely to give him that easy sense of success and approval which he had in the nursery, and he fears disapprobation. Hence he is on the defensive for this supposedly

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superior personality of his, and can only be aware of himself and self-conscious, where he would wish to be conscious of his job. In a later chapter we shall consider further this problem of the inferiority feeling as it affects the later life of the individual, but its origin is always found in these early years.

Sensitiveness and shyness are sometimes spoken of as though they were attractive qualities, which give a mild distinction to the child. In reality, they are the counterpart of conceit, and just as definite an indication of failure in the child's emotional life.

The fears of childhood present us with a series of interesting problems. Fear is the normal reaction which we all make to any challenge to our self-preserving instinct; and, as has been said earlier, it is obviously a valuable emotion in its proper place. The inexperience of the child will determine many of its fears, for, even in adult life, we tend to experience fear in face of the unknown. We should therefore provide a reasonably safe environment for the child, and give understanding tolerance to its ordinary fears; while any extraordinary fear demands a still higher degree of tolerance from us.

An unusual state of fear may be due to a variety of causes. The delicate child, who is called upon to face the same experiences as his more robust brother, will naturally have greater diffidence in so doing. While we adjust environment for his sake, we should do so in such a way that he is unaware of it, so that he will neither feel inferior on this score, nor come to rely on parental safeguarding. Many of the fears of childhood are acquired through suggestions from



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adults. The healthy child would have no special fear of cows, if it had not been suggested to him that they were worthy of fear. Probably the first time he met an innocent cow in a country lane his nurse said: 'Oh! here is a nice gate we can go through to get away from it,' and that was in itself a sufficiently potent suggestion. If we made a game about thunder and lightning, instead of cowering in the dining-room or exhibiting other signs of agitation, the child's fears of such phenomena would never develop beyond the normal. We spoke earlier of negative suggestions, and nowhere are they more devastating than in the creation of the fears of childhood.

The inquisitive and imaginative child will create fears for itself out of the stories that it hears; and, if these are unwise, it may re-live them in bed at night when every shadow and each sound takes on a special fearful significance. Darkness is to such a child a very special ordeal; and, though gentle encouragement should be given, no child who really experiences fear in the dark should be left without a light. It seems almost superfluous to add that it should never be laughed at. If the child can be encouraged to speak of its fears, in many cases a few words of truthful explanation will clear the ground. Otherwise there may be lurking fears, kept shut in the cupboards of the mind during the day, only to come out at night. Night terrors are indicative of a repression of these fears, and often sleep walking is the result of a similar process.

One's attitude towards the child who is frightened should be very nicely balanced between detachment

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and sympathy. There are certainly some children whose fears are kept up unconsciously because, through their persistence, a desirable end is obtained. If the mother comes up to hold the child's hand till he sleeps and is prepared to repeat this nightly, there is every inducement for his fears to be retained, and to make their nightly reappearance. There is moreover a very close relationship between over-mothering and excessive fear, of which we must speak at some length.

The only period of our lives in which we were really safe and perfectly comfortable was the intra-uterine period just before birth. Then we were completely dependent with no responsibilities of any kind, cushioned against all shocks and noises and entirely safe. In a curiously definite way, though we wrap it up in symbolism and normally it is unconscious, we all tend to look back to this state of our existence as to Nirvana. The child is born and begins from the first moment of its separate existence to make contact with a difficult world. There are unknown factors of all sorts, shocks, surprises and new experiences, and these increase in number as the child grows up, and leaves sheltered infancy behind it. Adult life is, for all of us, full of unknown factors. We can never tell what there will be round the next corner. However much we may wish it were otherwise, we must accept the truth that life is a series of adventures, and, if we are to meet it at all adequately, we need the spirit of adventure. The hero spirit is another name which might be given to this adventurousness, for it is that we see and appreciate in any

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story of heroism. The zest of living, that spirit that can send men out looking for difficulties to tackle, is the very antithesis of 'safety first'. Discretion is often indeed the better part of valour, and safety is certainly a wise and sane object at times; but 'safety first', though it may be a good motto for road users, is the worst principle for life in general. It is the childish attitude, and unfortunately many parents impress it unduly on their children. The child of whom too much care is taken, who is safeguarded from risks, coddled as regards health, and, as it were, helped down all the stairs and over all the puddles of life, can only grow up with a sense that he must take great care of himself. Normal fear is augmented in every such case, just as in adult life, after a spell of luxury and comfort, we fear hardship. Most of us can recognize these tendencies in ourselves, and tracing them back, can see that they come from the impression of over-carefulness given by our mothers or our nurses. Our children should be saved from this, because it is unfair that our regard for our own feelings about them should condemn them to future maladjustments.

The infantile, regressive impulse towards safety and the forward urge to adventure and virile manhood or womanhood are both present throughout life. The backward pull may show itself in our conscious thinking, in our unconscious attitudes, or in our dreams or phantasies. It is not only the small child who, in face of trouble, tends to curl up and with thumb in mouth (a relic of breast sucking) assume the flexed intra-uterine position. In later life

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many people in times of stress and difficulty regress to nail biting, and in sleep will assume this same posture. A man in middle life, who was very harassed by fears and childish character traits, though a successful professional man, had recently to have some dental extractions which he feared. Under the gas he dreamed that he was sitting peacefully, cross-legged like a Buddha, inside a large red egg! Bed-wetting is one of the ways in which the child expresses, quite unconsciously, its desire to remain in irresponsible infancy. Bed-wetters are practically always over-mothered children, or else they are feeling deprived of maternal love and are demanding it. This regressive tendency, with a large factor of suggestion and hopelessness, is responsible for nearly every case of this troublesome complaint.

A small boy who was rather timid had a dominating, forceful mother who, when he was four years old, had reproved him for shyness and told him that, when he shook hands with anyone, he should look them straight in the eyes and shake hands firmly with the rather 'pump-handle' action of over-confidence. He never forgot this first impressive lesson, and continued throughout life to repress all his fears. In middle life, when he was a successful (and very courageous) business man, he gradually developed an obscure sense of fear of responsibility, which became quite incapacitating. Much investigation was made into his mental life, and some poems which he had written, provided the clue to the trouble. They were dedicated to his own children, and were all singing the praises of the ante-natal state, the loveli-

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ness of that land from which they had come. Here then was Dr. Jekyll, the competent, hard-headed business man, and Mr. Hyde, the timid child looking longingly back to Nirvana, a side of himself only able to be expressed in his phantasy life. It had always been kept repressed, and so, not recognizing it, he had never been able to deal with it until, emerging in these obscure fears, it brought him to breakdown and treatment. In less dramatic but perhaps more obvious ways we can most of us see a similar trend in our own phantasies.

If we are to sum up what we have said about the child's fears, we might say that, in the main, they are due to lack of experience, faulty suggestions, and over-carefulness in upbringing. Any unwise handling of situations, which produces a sense of guilt in the child's mind, will of necessity bring about fear. In later life almost all breakdowns have in them elements of this childish guilt feeling. The frightened child needs tolerant and sympathetic handling without any undue emphasis on his dependence. It is better that he should talk about his fears, so that they may be explained away where necessary, and that he may realize how, in facing the thing he fears, he is sharing the common experience of humanity.

We have spoken of the difficulty which the child has in adjusting himself to the facts and realities of life. This is universal, although the spoiled child will have far greater difficulties than the one who has had less care and unwise solicitude. We soften down some of the hardness of reality to the child, quite legitimately, by the use of phantasy, fairy stories

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and make-believe. This approach to life has its appeal to the child, and it is certainly easier to make a game of swallowing the last ten mouthfuls of his dinner, than to demand unreasoning obedience, or to read a lecture on calorific values and the importance of maintaining adequately his metabolic processes. Fairy stories of the better kind present the child with many of the great truths of life in a form in which he can accept them with interest. They are also valuable in that they stimulate his imaginative gifts and give expression to his sense of the dramatic. Such tales should also provide his first experience of the wealth of language and the standards of good literature. If they fail in these respects the child is better without them.

The ultimate goal of the adult includes the facing of things as they really are, and we have therefore to bear in mind the danger of encouraging the phantasy approach to life too much. The tendency to day-dream may very easily persist to a pathological extent, for it provides the easiest possible escape from unpleasant or difficult reality. In adult life, few have managed to control this tendency at all satisfactorily. An unexpected financial stress creates problems which need our attention, but we find it much pleasanter to escape into phantasy of what might happen 'if only' the magical solution could be found. As he grows to the five or six years old period, the child needs gentle encouragement to face his realities with a sense of fun and adventure, for in this way he has less temptation to avoid them by becoming a day-dreamer. Day-dreaming in children may

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become such a habit that, carried on to later life, it not only makes them ineffective, but also endangers their adaptation to life, in some cases predisposing to serious mental breakdown.

Phantasy has, of course, a definite usefulness to the adult as well as to the child. Its escape function is its danger, but used and controlled it is valuable. A novel or a play encourages us in phantasy, and used in sensible moderation provides real recreation. The reader would not have taken up this book, had he not first had a phantasy of finding something worth while for himself in it. Our phantasies, if they can be transformed into creative ambition, provide much of the dynamic energy of existence.

## *Chapter VIII*

# The Problems of Childhood and Adolescence

It is not easy to divide up the difficulties of childhood into groups according to age periods, for they are all so closely interrelated as to be inseparable. In the last chapter it was said that the first seven years of life were the most important period from the point of view of character formation. Educationalists contend that the time of adolescence is the most important stage of physical, moral and spiritual development. They may be right, or they may be too much influenced by the fact that this is the period in which they see most of the child; they see less of him before he is seven years of age. One object of this book is to help the reader to see how all the problems of youth and manhood are linked to those of the nursery and the cradle. The child is always logical, and argues correctly to itself about life on the premises which have been given to it in early days. Did we but make a good start, the difficulties of adult life would be relatively simple of solution, that is in the subjective sense. Our own attitude to these difficulties would then hardly justify the use of the word 'problem'.



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At varying ages we have different situations to meet, and, in consequence of what has gone before, our reactions to them will be balanced or faulty. The mental outlook which we have at seven, is still there at seventy, unless we have definitely altered it. The change in age and circumstance and histrionic power will often keep it hidden, but critical search will find it to be still there and active, and breakdown may bring it to the fore, as for instance the guilt sense to which reference has been previously made.

In the child's development much depends upon the family relationship in which he grows up. There is fairly general agreement upon the question of what should be the normal phases through which his interest develops. For the boy the first stage is that of mother dependence, as the mother, or her substitute, is clearly the chief figure in his emotional life from the time he is born up to, say, seven or eight years of age. He runs to his mother in his difficulties, and depends for the necessities of life and for education upon her. Then, if his father is the right kind of man, someone whom the boy can admire, at about this age he begins the phase of hero worship. Seven or eight is the time at which his desires to go and 'do things like father' becomes a real force, and the boy's realization that he is a man in embryo begins to provide a quite healthy sense of separation of the sexes in the small boy's mind. Soon after this (if he has not already done so) he goes to school, and some part of his hero worship is transferred to schoolmasters and senior boys. He grows in age and competence; he gets nearer to the ideal of being like

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the older boys; and this stage of interest in his school-fellows will last till about seventeen or eighteen. All these ages will vary somewhat according to the type of boy, and his social environment. The boy from a working-class home is likely to develop more quickly than the public school boy. In this decade from seven to seventeen the boy's chief interest therefore is in his own sex. He has been, or should have been, getting away from petticoat domination. This phrase may sound untrue or unwelcome to those who do not think very far into it. It is not, of course, true that the boy can get on without his mother or other women; but it is an established fact that his attitude towards them should be becoming steadily less childish and less dependent, because the gradual emancipation from feminine control gives him the chance he needs to develop the essential masculine qualities, without which the rest of his life would be impoverished. It is useful to note that here is found the beginning of the tendency which, though quite normal at his age, may sometimes be abnormally prolonged into later life, namely, homo-sexuality.

The first phase of the boy's emotional life is one of heterosexuality, or interest in the opposite sex. He then passes over to this period of interest in his own sex, and in late adolescence, having developed his own masculinity, the biological demand for completion shows itself by his dominant emotional interest becoming hetero-sexual once more; this time, however, he is looking not for a mother but for a mate. The boy who fails to develop masculine character traits, though he may not be definitely

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effeminate in later life, will be more likely to take as a mate his complement, a rather masculine type of woman. If the homo-sexual phase persists into late life, it will always be found that there are some definitely feminine traits in him, or at least something negatively masculine in development. The ideal development of the boy demands a number of factors, which it is often very difficult to regulate. Both parents play their part, and both have, at the proper time, to be willing to efface themselves to a large extent from the picture. It is clear that very few children will ever have a development which approximates to the ideal, for there are so many ways in which things can go wrong. Perhaps the commonest error is concerned with the mother's relationship to her son. This has been hinted at in earlier chapters, but we need here to look at it a little more closely.

Even the reading of this paragraph will, in all probability, begin to stir some feeling of opposition or resentment in the minds of many. Mothers who have brought up children will begin to feel somewhat on the defensive, and many sons will be ready to dismiss criticism of the mother-son relationship as savouring of some disloyalty. This is largely due to the fact that they are usually the best mothers who over-mother their children, and who establish this too close and over-dependent relationship with their sons. The good, careful, devoted, self-sacrificing mother will always be a heroine to her sons. The small boy likes to be mothered, and this tendency persists into adult life in the majority of men. Since

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the devoted mother, who is also vital in her power of interest, likes to give this mothering, it is clear that the relationship is mutually a satisfactory one. It is therefore fair to assume that every good mother needs to be particularly careful that she does not unduly fix her son's interest on herself. There are, of course, many foolish mothers, who by indulgence and oversolicitude will make their children, and in particular their sons, dependent upon them to an absurd extent; so that instead of getting their independence and their freedom, they become 'whiteheaded boys', who will go through life happy only so long as they have some maternally disposed person on whom they may depend.

If the father is not an attractive figure to the boy, the phase of mother interest is likely to be prolonged. The father may perhaps drink, or there may be discord between him and the mother. He may be unjust to his sons, possibly through jealousy of their mother's interest in them; or he may set impossibly high standards for the boy to live up to. In each of these cases the boy's interest is repelled, and tends to turn back to the mother, who appears even more admirable and love-worthy than she was before. These are but a few of the ways in which this state of what may be called a 'mother-fixation' is brought about.

It is important that we should recognize the reality of such a condition and the possibility of its growth, because the after effects may be quite disastrous. A professional man of sixty-five recently had a severe breakdown as the result of 'falling in love' for the

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first time. The real difficulty was not that he had found someone whom he wanted to marry, but that he had to decide the question of whether he could leave his mother. It was marriage or mother with him and, perhaps luckily for the lady concerned, he decided not to marry. This may sound a ludicrous example, but it is strangely common, and there is an extremely large number of less marked instances of the same sort. The man whose whole idea of womanhood is centred round the figure of his mother is, if he marries, likely to choose a woman who resembles her, and who can, by substitution, play a similar rôle with regard to himself. Many of the men who have this problem will remain bachelors, because they have never been able to free their love (which is in reality their sexuality) from its association with the mother figure.

In other ways this mother-fixation makes its appearance. The boy is likely to suffer from an undue sense of his own preciousness. In consequence, he will very likely have an increased degree of fear and a resulting desire for safety. He may grow up with these characteristics, and we shall find him in adult life as a rather selfish man who is not accustomed to waiting upon other people and so never passes the salt! He was always so precious to his mother that she had to concern herself with his damp socks and the weight of his underwear, and now in after life he must concern himself with similar problems to a quite undue extent. Draughts, wet weather and colds in the head are inevitably matters of great importance, because if so precious a person as

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he were to die the world would suffer a great loss.

It will be clear from what has been said in a previous chapter that in such a relationship as this much undue weight must be given to the suggestions and ideas that the mother makes to her sons. Her word is law; and, although she may have the best possible intentions, and never reach the length of dictating to her son of thirty-five (as quite often occurs) what tie he shall wear in the morning, yet the boy may grow up into a man who is unduly influenced in his judgments by the standards of 'what mother thought'. Many of his criticisms of his wife and of married life are likely to be based upon her failure to do things in the same way as his mother did them. He has never sufficiently escaped into ~~that~~ real freedom in which he and his wife can make their own life and their own traditions.

Maternal self-effacement is easy to discuss but difficult to accomplish. There are many mothers who in speaking of their sons of fourteen will say: 'My boy is such a dear boy; he tells me everything'; and, since he may in fact be a very decent, self-respecting member of society, it is rather hard to point out that this is not quite an ideal state of affairs, and that he should, at that age, have some man as his real confidant rather than his mother. Where the father has died or has to be away from home, a particularly difficult situation is created, which can only be solved by the finding of some convenient uncle or father substitute of the right type who will take some part in helping the boy through this stage; failing this the mother may attempt the extremely

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difficult task of playing the paternal rather than the maternal rôle to her son.

The boy whose mother has died in his early life, or in whom the mother has no interest, may be driven into difficult straits. The modern stepmother or her equivalent is more likely to over-mother him than to treat him harshly, and the result may be a very strong fixation of his emotional interest upon her. On the other hand, deprived of his mother, he may start making phantasies of the ideal mother he ought to have had, and these phantasies may grow to have an alarming hold upon him, with the result that he spends a large part of his conscious life either in a phantasy world or in looking for someone who will play this much-desired part for him. The following case furnishes an interesting example: A man who at thirty-five had a nervous breakdown had this history. His mother, who evidently must have been somewhat mentally deranged, made a practice of beating him unmercifully, and from the age of three till twelve hardly a day was missed. He was awakened and brought out of bed at nights to be beaten for things he had done but which he had quite forgotten. At twelve, with a very understandable sense of injustice in his mind, he ran away from home and went abroad, where for the next six years he found employment of various kinds. During these years he was building up in his mind an elaborate phantasy picture of what his mother was really like—an attractive, kindly, maternal figure, and at the age of eighteen he returned to England, having convinced himself that in reality this was the true picture of his

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mother, and that his early memory was a delusion. He found on return that she was exactly as she always had been; she showed him the door and he went abroad again. Some time after this he married a woman many years older than himself, who was to him a mother substitute. The gradual realization of this false position was one of the most serious causative factors in his breakdown.

It may be thought that the picture of the dangers of this period of the boy's life are somewhat overdrawn. It is true that for purposes of illustration some of the extreme dangers have been quoted. Let us, however, emphasize the fact that, if we are concerned to give him the best possible emotional environment, he must certainly have love, and a constant sense of maternal interest, which should persist in a different form throughout life. But he must be allowed and encouraged to grow away from the childish or dependent attitude to his mother, so that he may be sure to develop and make his own life, and ultimately find the right kind of woman as a mate.

That phase in the boy's life in which he is developing his masculine interests is of very great importance. As he passes from hero worship of the romantic figure to a sense of being a member of a team, and then a leader of a group, he should be getting those first lessons in responsibility and leadership that he will need in later life. Many people are puzzled and not a few are, unfortunately, shocked when crises of a homo-sexual kind occur in schools or amongst groups of boys. It should be remembered that the boy has a



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normal homo-sexual phase; and if there be added to this a self-indulgent tendency and an ignorance of sex matters, which drives him to probe and experiment with what he considers adult mysteries, there is almost bound to be trouble. This may have to be met by disciplinary measures for the sake of other people and because it results in anti-social conduct, is in truth a mental disorder which, if it is handled with tolerance and understanding, is almost invariably curable. No boy, even if he has to be removed from school, should be given any undue sense of shame, provided that, when he has been helped to recognize them, he is willing to set about making efforts to change those features in his character that need alteration.

During this period the boy has normally very little interest in the opposite sex. The typical boy's book provides an admirable instance of this, for there are no love affairs, and such few girls as come into the story only appear as lieutenants to the hero or else as the masculine or tomboy type of girl who can assist in sailing a pirate ship or whatever it may be. He is interested in girls primarily as 'pals', and as such he needs to meet and get to know the sisters of his friends. If these friendships are forbidden, it is likely that, as he passes beyond adolescence, he may begin to make undesirable friendships for himself, and may approach the time for serious consideration of marriage with a wrong conception of womanhood, or with a definite ignorance on the subject.

The stages in the emotional development of the girl differ somewhat from those of the boy. In her

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case the first person of importance is again, of course, the mother, and it is to her that most of the child's interest goes out. Approximately, if we are to compare the age periods with those given for the boy, this phase of mother interest lasts for the girl from birth to nine or ten years of age. At about nine or ten, when she is at school, first the mistresses, and later the other girls, become the principal objects of her affection. It may indeed be said that, for the first fourteen years of her life, she is homo-sexual; up to this time her father has been of considerable, but not paramount, importance. The changes of puberty occur about the age of fourteen, and there is, in consequence, an increased awareness of the breadth, depth and meaning of life. The sexual awakening adds something to her latent maternal instinct which, up to this time, has been mainly expended on dolls and to some extent on small babies. She begins to realize that the fulfilment of life for her means motherhood, and that in the achievement of motherhood a man, of necessity, is involved. This is sometimes quite a definite conception in the girl's mind, but often it is only vaguely felt. If her father is the right sort of man, he commends himself to her as the type and pattern of manhood and as an admirable figure, the sort of person who attracts her, and with whom she feels she could share life. From this age of fifteen, therefore, the girl begins to develop a more heterosexual interest, which leads her on to the time, from eighteen onwards, when she should be ready to find a mate.

The phase of mother domination presents dangers

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to the girl just as it does to the boy, but not in so marked a degree. There is, after all, something which we can recognize as being vaguely sexual, which creates a rather special tie between the mother and her sons and the father and his daughters. Although the mother, by virtue of her admirable characteristics, may become a very dominant interest in the life of her daughters, and may direct their ideas and their whole future to a quite unjustifiable extent, there is not usually the same intimate and inhibiting relationship that will exist between the same type of mother and her sons.

There is, perhaps, no more important person in the growing girl's environment than her father. The rôle that he plays in the adolescent period is vital. If he ill-treats or misuses her mother, either then or at an earlier stage, if he is selfish or unjust, he will have created the most effective barrier between his daughter and her goal of biological fulfilment—marriage. Certainly she will not want to marry somebody who is like that, and she will begin to find confirmatory evidence of her wisdom in ruling out marriage by noticing all the other unhappy marriages that are to be seen around her. She may, quite likely, if there is real injustice on her father's part, develop a great sense of rebellion to him, and a protective feeling towards her mother. This feeling may develop to such an extent that the girl may wish to supplant her father, and to become the protector of her mother, of whom she is fond. In consequence perhaps she will display masculine character traits. Adler has called this 'the masculine protest'; and it is

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well seen in individuals whom many readers must know, persons who, almost deliberately it would seem, develop masculine habits of thought and speech, and have become perhaps ultra-feminist in their conduct and outlook.

There may, of course, be quite a different reaction to the father; he may be a particularly attractive type of man, perhaps more admirable to the small child than the mother. There may in such a case be a father-fixation, in which the girl's interest is so engaged with her father, or, we might almost say, she is so in love with him, that in all probability she will never find anyone so good, so admirable, or so desirable, whom she could take as a husband. She may perhaps marry some nice, kind, safe, elderly man, or she may equally run away from the idea of marriage, and sublimate all her conjugal and maternal instincts in a profession. An instance of this, which is not without its importance, was to be found in a woman who for sixteen years had worn an engagement ring. She had never been engaged, but she had worn it as a defence to protect her against proposals from likely suitors. Behind this situation there lay a father problem. The father had been so wonderful that she knew without any question that there could never be any other man in her life of equal merit, therefore she was not prepared to take any risks.

It will be noticed that the relationship of the girl to her father and the boy to his mother are extremely similar. Freud has given the name of the *Œdipus-complex* to this situation, which to some extent or

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other is universal, though usually quite unconscious. In the Greek legend, Œdipus killed his father and married his mother, being driven to this by unconscious and uncontrollable forces. The feminine equivalent is found in the legend of Electra.

It is extraordinary how, in quite young children, there will be found traces of this desire to possess the parent of the opposite sex; and we do not need to be shocked, or think of it in terms of adult sexuality, although very likely there may be a similarity. It is sufficient to explain it, however, in terms of that ambition which is characteristic of every healthy child. The average child of three or four is very likely to propose marriage to its parent of the opposite sex, and a little understanding, in addition to a sense of humour, will guide us through situations of this kind so that there shall be no undue emphasis, and no unhealthy repressions of what is a quite normal, natural desire at that stage.

The homo-sexual phase in the girl's development is rather more important from the point of view of ordinary life than it is in the case of the boy. Normally, it lasts up till fourteen or fifteen, and in this period there will be found sets, gangs and cliques at school, while there are, for the majority of girls, a certain number of emotional friendships. These '*schwärmereien*' or '*grandes passions*' are for most people only a passing phase, and do not need any very special handling. They may at times, however, be very difficult to deal with, and those older women who are the objects of them need considerable tolerance and wisdom if they are to prevent the

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relationship becoming sentimental and harmful to the girl, and if at the same time they are not to rebuff these expressions of affection too abruptly. The adolescent love which is finding its way out towards another member of the same sex has to be respected, and with great tact and kindness directed into healthier and more creative channels. If the girl's father is the sort of man who does not command respect, or if perhaps there has been some sexual trauma, a fright from some boy, or a male exhibitionist, or pursuit by a tramp, then it is quite likely that the girl will be thrown back to the safer phase of homo-sexual interest. This stage may thus be prolonged into adult life; or an unfortunate love affair may result in a woman who has just achieved the hetero-sexual attitude regressing to a homo-sexual position once more. Since there is in the present state of our society a considerable number of women who, by reason of the inequality of the sex ratio, never marry, it must inevitably result that homosexuality, more often of a purely emotional kind, but sometimes with a definitely physical type of expression, must make its appeal to a large number of women. They will argue, and one must have considerable sympathy with them, that under the circumstances they are surely entitled to express their love and interest in this way. To the medical psychologist it is, however, quite evident that any woman who is to obtain her maximum freedom, and consequent effectiveness in life, has need to achieve a hetero-sexual position, in which she is ready to accept the right man should he come along. She may, however, have to sublimate that

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developed, adult, sexual instinct into creative work and social objectives. This sublimation, or altered form of expression for the sex instinct, is often very difficult to achieve. It provides, however, a link between physical and spiritual values, for though love is based upon physical mechanisms it does not and should not stop there, but can pass altogether beyond the material sphere.

This question of the child's outgoing interest and its direction has been dealt with at some length, and it will be evident that many of the maladjustments and problems of childhood can be understood in the light of what has been said. We need to be constantly on the watch for deviations from the normal development, if we are interested in the mental hygiene of the growing personality.

There are many other problems which perplex those parents who are concerned for their child's welfare. The only child has been referred to before, and there is no question but that he and the youngest child run special risks of which we must be cognisant. Many children are, of course, to all intents and purposes youngest children, because of the length of time which elapses between their birth and the arrival of the next baby. The psychotherapist who has to deal with adult neurosis is constantly made aware, in his research into primary causes, of the importance of factors such as this. The child who for any length of time has held the centre of the stage, and has been the main concern of its parents or nurse and the idol of its grandparents, is bound to experience considerable difficulty in adjusting itself to the arrival of a

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supplanter. A great deal of bullying of younger brothers or the teasing of younger sisters is an expression of unconscious or sometimes conscious resentment at having been ousted from the position of supremacy. This jealousy of the youngest child is much commoner than most people would suppose, and often the child who outwardly is 'perfectly sweet' about his baby brother will be found to be secretly stealing his toys, pulling his hair when nobody is there, or dreaming that the baby has died, which in some cases at any rate is certainly the fulfilment of an unconscious wish. A small boy of seven, with a younger brother of five rather cleverer and decidedly more popular than he, had for a time a repetitive nightmare that his brother was dead, and that he was nailing up his coffin with great vigour. Again, the arrival of a new member of the family may quite often result in a desire on the part of the supplanted child to regress to infantile habits. A small boy of four whose younger sister aged two was rather backward, seemed quite happy in the relationship until she began to talk. As she became a more interesting person, she naturally took some of the limelight from him, and he began sleep-walking, and in his sleep was always wandering to his mother's bedroom; he also went back to bed-wetting. A small girl of four was taken out for walks with her baby sister of nine or ten months. She demanded to be given a seat in the perambulator and, having been rather unwisely yielded to, proceeded to wet herself, thereby unconsciously attempting to return to the privileged position of babyhood. Most readers will



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be able to supply from their own experience instances which are somewhat similar, if they have eyes to observe these reactions on the part of children.

As we have previously noted, enuresis, or bed-wetting, which persists beyond infancy is, in practically every case, a psychological disorder. This may seem strange to many people, who have been accustomed to regard it as some mysterious upset of the physical functioning of the bladder. There are two main factors concerned in the production or retention of the condition. The suggestibility of the child is perhaps the more important. So often it is punished or held up to opprobrium for the habit, that it regards its condition as hopeless, and incurable. The very fact that a mackintosh sheet is provided for it, perhaps even up to nineteen or twenty years of age, is in itself the most potent suggestion possible. Clearly such provision on the part of its parents is an indication that the child is expected to wet the bed, and so it does. For the small boy at school who has this persistent habit there are many other suggestions of considerable strength. The ragging by other schoolboys, the segregation, and the general air of disgust and disapproval, all serve to confirm his idea that he is the victim of an incurable illness. He has, moreover, been given all kinds of pills, been wakened at night, and been deprived of his evening drinks, and gone through all the other routine performances without avail.

The other important factor is that same unconscious desire to retain the privileged irresponsibility of infancy. It has been hinted at in the illustration

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that was given above, and explained at some length in the last chapter, as a part of the universal regressive tendency. Where bed-wetting persists up to the age of puberty or later, it will always be found that the child has been over-mothered, or is, for some reason, demanding that type of treatment from life. The understanding of the condition demands, therefore, that these two factors shall be recognized. Steps must be taken to give the child a better and truer view of life; and, with increased freedom, to give it a greater sense of the thrill and romantic adventurousness of growing up. At the same time it is necessary to stage-manage affairs, and, having given the child adequate assurance of its curability, and removed all stigma or sense of punishment, to arrange perhaps for a temporary change of environment, and to remove the mackintosh sheet.

Reverting from this digression to the youngest member of the family and its problems, one can notice how great is the effect of unequal treatment of children in the same family. Preferences for one particular child on the part of the parents are, in these days, very rarely admitted, but they still exist, and, unless the parents are quite frank with themselves about the matter, their preferences are likely to be recognized by the child, though it may not indicate that it is aware of them. There are very few persons who cannot say, without any hesitation at all, who was their father's favourite and who their mother's in their own family; and, although favouritism may be very little obvious, it must produce the effect of a sense of superiority in the one child,

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and a sense of inferiority or injustice in the other.

Unevenness of treatment is also an important causative factor of discontent, and even neurosis. It is fairer to a child to treat it with consistent unkindness, than to give it love and kindness at one moment, and ignore or treat it harshly and unfairly at another time. The contrast between the two modes of treatment is liable to create not only rebellion, but a great sense of the inconsistency and wrongness of life. The inferiority feelings that children acquire are derived from manifold causes, and the majority of them would be avoidable if only their parents or teachers had a little more imagination and understanding. There are few greater blows to the child's self-esteem than to feel that it is not wanted, and it is not only with illegitimate or adopted children that this is an important matter. In these days a good many children are accidentally born, and their parents, not having thought out the matter sufficiently, may sooner or later allow this to appear through some slight remark, which to them means nothing, but which is an almost mortal wound to the child. Rivalry between brothers and sisters has also to be watched with a very shrewd eye. There should always be differentiation in the family between the rights that are dependent upon varying ages, but there should never be any difference between the rights of sex. Certain occupations or amusements may be more suitable for boys than for girls, but there should be some equivalent provision made for the girls, otherwise they are likely to grow up with a sense of inferiority and of smouldering rebellion

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against the male sex, for what appears, quite rightly, to be an unjust privilege. Tomboyism may be one result of the girl's protest against this unjust sex limitation. Repeatedly one finds in women patients, how through the whole of life there has been a persistent revolt against the injustice which started when 'mother let the boys do something rather pleasant and the girls had to stay and be little ladies in the nursery'. In all these troubles of childhood, which may seem to our mind so trivial, we need the gift of imagination and the realization that the child's mind is well balanced until our adult bunglings have caused it to become illogical and unreasonable.

Questions of relationship to authority will, of course, make themselves apparent in the school period and adolescent stages of the child's growth. His reactions then are likely to be conditioned by the earlier attitudes which he has developed. There are one or two special ways, however, in which authority may influence him. When the child goes to school, it is quite likely that his parents may demand a standard of work and conduct from him which is unduly high. Prior to his preparatory school-days, the child has been in the hands of governesses, or has been taught by his parents. He goes to school and begins, from then onwards, to have reports made upon him. Parental ambition often knows no limit, and, in what is really their anxiety for reflected glory, parents will often blame or nag a child for failure to get the results that they would like to see him achieve. Sometimes it is demanded of him that he shall do as well as his father, or some other rela-

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tion, is supposed to have done when he was at school. Prowess at games or his general conduct is examined unfavourably by comparison with the performances of other people; and, in general, a considerable emphasis is laid upon the results he achieves, or fails to achieve. This emphasis on results is extremely harmful, and whatever standards in the matter may be set at school, it is essential that parents who have regard for their children's well-being shall make it quite evident that effort counts in their opinion more than results, whether these results be failures or successes. The failure to live up to the standard that has been set for him will often lead to an almost hopeless sense of inferiority, and a considerable inhibiting of the child's real powers.

During this period of school life, both early and late, the child should be developing his own powers of independent thought and action, and, as has been said before, this needs quite definite encouragement from the parents. It may help us to realize somewhat more clearly the goal toward which we wish the child to strive if we consider our own motives and the forces which drive us. Many people suffer from an almost perpetual sense of compulsion. They *must* always be doing things, they *ought* to do something else, or alas! it is their *duty* to go to a certain place. This constant bondage to a sense of duty lies at the bottom of very much weariness and boredom in later life. There is no one who has not realized the difference between the round of golf which is played as a duty game with some uncongenial partner, where we are tired before we have played six holes, and the

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game played with someone with whom we want to play, where thirty-six holes may still find us fresh and enjoying the game. There are many things that we like; but, if one can differentiate between the use of the two words one may say that the things we *like* are those which give pleasure to our more infantile, sensory, selfish life, and the things which we *want* are determined by the organized adult personality. We do not like going to the dentist, and yet we want to go because we wish to keep our teeth good, and save ourselves trouble in the future. We do not like to work long hours, but want to do so because by this means we are carrying through some plan, made for ourselves, and fulfilling some other adult purpose. Often we fail to think in this way about something that we are undertaking, and we do it with the reluctant sigh of a person who is acting under compulsion. A little further thought on the matter would show us that we really want to do it, and consequently we have no possible justification for self-pity of this kind. Taking this use of the two words, we may say that ideally we should do nothing in life that we do not want to do; for in this way we would attain to a degree of individual freedom, that in truth makes life worth living. A similar ideal must be kept in mind when we are guiding the child; for as he moves out from the shelter of home life and parental traditions into the larger world of school life outside the home, we want him to take all that is best in the old traditions, but, at the same time, to have a sense of liberty and self-determination that shall make him happy, disciplined, effective and

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free. Much of the traditionalism of our lives would be better for such critical examination. Tradition is not bad because it is old; it is only harmful in so far as it prevents us from growing, and keeps us in the childish, dependent relationship to life.

With this growth of independence which comes about in the child as it begins to take its place in the world, there is an opening out of its consciousness and a readiness to absorb new ideas, which is perhaps most marked in those years immediately succeeding puberty. The suggestion and definite teaching which we have given to the child in earlier days have now to give place to the presentation of ideals. This potential man or woman is ready to see big visions and great possibilities in life, and, provided that we do not insist on absolute standards, we cannot present too many ideals. The adolescent is hungry for experience, and will find it along second-rate lines unless we introduce him to things which are first-rate. Ethical and religious concepts, international and social affairs, politics and problems of the day are typical of the topics which it is suitable to present to him. We should offer him his freedom by introducing him to these subjects, and to the best existing thought about them, without directing him as to exactly what he shall believe or do. The daring spirit of 'high courage' of the knights of old is one to be approved, and adult cynicism will generally stand rebuked by the results achieved.

During this period of school life and adolescence, there are a great many problems which will arise in individual cases, and give cause for concern.

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Many of them are traceable, by those who will give patient consideration to the matter, to some of the mechanisms or faulty developments which have already been mentioned. There is a big group of moral disorders, some of which are sexual, and many of them will result in anti-social conduct. The child who feels cramped by his circumstances, or whose development has been warped by parental over-solicitude, is more than likely to make some over-reaction in his attempts to achieve freedom. The small child who has not got adequate outlet for his creative ideas, will probably become a 'limelighter', or sensation-monger, and may be a typical naughty or unmanageable child. The adolescent may, under similar circumstances, become a somewhat dramatic *poseur*, or take up some line of unusual conduct which although its results may be satisfactory or the reverse to his fellows, will give him a rewarding sense of achievement. A sense of the deprivation of love from which the child may suffer, because he is really given less than his fair share of affection and approval, may also come about from a contrast between undue spoiling and subsequent harshness. The child, of whatever age, who suffers in this way is very likely indeed to revenge himself somehow upon society, and also to wish to take something real for himself in the nature of a substitute for that of which he feels deprived. Behind practically every case of thieving there lies this situation, and in just the same way the boy or girl will, like the adult, have a tendency to self-indulgence of some kind when they are suffering from self-pity. A boy of thirteen was re-



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moved from his school for stealing. He was clever and attractive, and his relations had not only spoiled him in many ways, but had also given him a rather unwise amount of responsibility and freedom. Shortly before this episode occurred, they had in some way realized this fact, and had thought to remedy it by taking a rather unduly harsh line with him. He had been beaten for some trivial offence, and reacted with a considerable sense of injustice which was not altogether unreasonable. His subsequent conduct was entirely occasioned by this; for, in stealing, he was revenging himself against the social order, which he felt to be irrational and unjust. Through his spoiling and sense of self-importance he had been made an individualist rather than a team worker, and his sense of social values and the rights of others was strangely deficient. Feeling that something tremendously valuable had been taken from him in the way of approval, to which he was entitled, he attempted, more or less unconsciously, to get something back for himself by taking what he fancied. He had, while under treatment, a very interesting dream. He was driving a bus in London, and was in a great hurry to get back to the garage. He was very annoyed that people would ring the bell, and want to get on and off, because *he* wanted to get home to *his* tea. Here the interpretation is not difficult to find. The bus stands for the idea of collective responsibility. It only exists for the purpose of conveying passengers, who are intended to get on or off the vehicle. He is the driver, but he ignores his responsibility to the community, and only wishes to

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gratify or indulge his own instinctive desires. This was exactly the emotional situation in which he was, and under treatment he realized what was going wrong, and was able to acquire fresh values for himself which completely ended his trouble. This is a very typical instance of stealing, and practically every case of the kind can, if one has the opportunity and patience, be dealt with on similar lines.

There can surely be few things more important than that it should be impressed upon society at large, and upon those responsible for dealing with delinquencies of various kinds, whether in the nursery, school or court, that all of them have causes. The majority of such acts are the indications of mental or psychoneurotic disorder, and many of them are susceptible to treatment.

When the facts are established, a diagnosis of the cause must be made. Punishment or social ostracism—to stand in the corner, or to go to prison—may be the wisest form of treatment. We must stress, however, that in the interest of the community as well as of the individual, a plan of treatment should always be thought out and put into action. \* \*

## *Chapter IX*

### Adult Problems

That same emergence of earlier problems and difficulties of which we have spoken in the last chapter must be still more obvious when we are considering adult life. All the faulty reactions and adjustments of earlier life play their part in unfitting us for adult responsibilities; and the warping that has taken place in the child's growth will be reflected in his grown-up years. The child is father to the man, and there is not one of us but realizes the truth of the old French proverb: 'Grattez l'adulte et vous y trouverez l'enfant.' Perhaps the most fundamental lack in the life of the adult man or woman is that of an adequate purpose in life. The pursuit of money, or of pleasure, the hollowness of a great many of our occupations in modern life produce a cynicism and aimlessness that is tragic, and men and women ask themselves whether life is really worth living, and too often find it merely an existence. Where then does this mood or conception of life come from? Surely it is faulty, and springs from the child's failure to achieve a real sense of freedom for itself.

We are only the creatures of our circumstances, and

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are driven by them, if we have failed to grasp the fact that we are free agents, able to make approximately what alterations and adjustments we choose in our mental outlook, whatever the predetermining factors of our heredity and environment may have been. Throughout our life, whether on the biological, or psychological plane, there is constantly present the desire for completion. In our physical being, it is obvious in an infinity of ways that there is this purpose dominating everything. A fly gets into our eye, and immediately nature reacts by pouring out tears whose purpose is the removal of the foreign body that ought not to be there. Its presence constitutes an offence against the completeness and perfection of life, and it must be removed. Or, again, we cut ourselves; nature, through a marvellously complicated mechanism, provides for the laying down of new tissues, the re-establishment of the blood supply, and the repair of the catastrophe, which had threatened to make us incomplete. As the result of a chill, we allow certain micro-organisms in our nasal mucous membrane to multiply, and start a campaign against our physical well-being: nature reacts by mobilising large forces of cells in our blood which have a defensive action, and whose purpose is to beat this invading army. The heat of mobilization for war is indicated by our rise in temperature, part of nature's beneficent mechanism of defence, or its attempt to maintain this completeness of the organism. These are typical of the biological phenomena that can be seen on every hand. Equally, in matters of a spiritual or psychological nature, there are to be seen proofs

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of the same essential process, and it is our lot to assist nature with such understanding as we have, in this struggle for completeness. The man or woman who, through the acquiring of faulty standards in early life, has repressed certain valuable, instinctive tendencies which demand expression will be made aware of this. The return of repressed tendencies in an obsessional fashion in our thought life, or in dreams, is part of nature's mechanism by which it calls our attention to the fact that something valuable is being missed out of our life. One of the aims of life is happiness, and happiness depends upon self-expression, adjustment and freedom. The circumstances of our life may certainly make this adjustment extremely difficult, but, if we ourselves had an internal sense of harmony, they could not deprive us of happiness and a sense of purpose. The unmaking of mistakes and the undoing of knots, which have been tied in earlier life, in itself brings about a sense of liberty and achievement, and a clearer vision of the ideal of progress in every sphere. This will partially solve the problem of aimlessness or rudderlessness from which so many people suffer in the days of early manhood or womanhood. It is essential, we may say, for the happiness of life that we should have an object more worth loving than ourselves.

The psychologically adjusted adult must have an individuality, and yet he must not be an 'individualist'. He must be able to work with others for the common need, and be able to be ignored and of little account as a member of the team. Enforced team work may prove an almost impossible strain for the

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man or woman who has never learnt to welcome the opportunity of such co-operation, and whose standards of success and achievement are determined by their own personal success or failure. Yet something has gone wrong if he does not develop a power of standing alone, and having a view-point of his own; a view-point that is his because it is the result of his own thought and effort. The child begins its life as a dependent and suggestible being. The adult man or woman should have developed, through the experiences of growth, an independence and a self-reliance sufficient to enable him or her to stand alone and undismayed against the storms of life. The difficulties of taking responsibility are perhaps some of the commonest ways in which failure is experienced.

Many of the most difficult problems which face the adult arise as the result of an inadequate self-reliance. The over-confident person is not necessarily the most efficient, or the soundest in judgment; but, on the other hand, the diffidence of many people prevents their ever being effective. Mainly as the result of their early training, they lay undue emphasis upon safety, and demand an impossible standard of perfection from themselves. They cannot take the responsibility of deciding and going ahead in a particular matter, when it involves the possibility of their being wrong. This is, of course, an adult version of what we have seen in childhood, and is a desire for safety coupled with the fear of adventure. This tendency needs to be recognized and made very conscious in our adult difficulties if we are to make much progress with them. Perfectionism is a

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very expressive term which has been coined to describe that state of mind which leads to the undoing of so many. If, as a result of early spoiling or self-importance, we regard ourselves as entitled to have everything in life perfectly arranged for us, and if we then go on to demand for ourselves that we shall be perfectly successful in all we undertake, we have created a false standard of values, and this will of necessity have a compulsive and harassing effect upon us.

So many people make the mistake of confusing their ideals with their standards. We should, it is true, 'hitch our waggon to a star', but if we demand that we shall reach the star we are foolish. Our ideals would cease to be ideals if we reached them; they constitute the goal towards which we strive, but which we can never attain. Those who have a tendency to waste time and good energy in self-reproach and morbid depreciation of their own efforts have usually made this mistake and have assumed that the ideal they have set themselves is a standard that they must live up to. As long as they persist with this muddled thinking there can be no real peace of mind for them. We may often give lip service to the idea that we cannot be perfect, but a real acceptance in ourselves of this idea, that we must often be content with second-rate performances even while we go on striving towards the best, is one of the greatest steps that we can take towards securing real peace of mind. We very often see this perfectionist standard showing itself in the ordinary everyday conduct of life. The man who is constantly apologetic for himself, whether in business, games or social relationships, has ob-

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viously got at the back of his mind some false standard of what he *ought* to be like rather than a sensible healthy ideal. The rush and harassment of home or business life is generally determined by this same condition. We are too much slaves to compelling standards of conduct.

The bulk of the maladjustments of adult life result from our self-protective efforts. Throughout life we are trying to temper the wind to our own shornness; and, whether the challenge comes from our own thoughts or from external conditions, we find ourselves constantly looking for some easy solution or for some cotton-wool with which to surround ourselves. Perhaps the commonest of all these efforts to shelter ourselves is seen in the retreat to phantasy. In the face of difficult situations the tendency is to run away from the reality of life into pleasant unreality which we can shape to suit ourselves. The habit of phantasy making, as has been pointed out earlier, may become serious and get such a grip upon the individual that in time, instead of his having phantasies, the phantasy may be said to have got hold of him and to be almost *môre* real than reality. The men or women who are rather ineffective visionaries have usually become so because, under the stress of circumstances to which they cannot adjust themselves, their creative interest and idealism have tended to emerge along the impossible lines of phantasy. In modern life, many of these retreats from reality have come to be regarded almost as special cults. The desire for the magical solution and for perfect knowledge which takes the



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worried woman or man to a fortune-teller is very much allied to the pathetic searchings of those who resort to so-called spiritualistic phenomena. It is even true to say that, in a considerable number of cases, religion may be used very much as a defence against the realities of life and provides a retreat into a comfortable phantasy for the regressive individual. This applies, not only to Christianity (though needless to say it is antithetic to a real Christian philosophy), but to every other religion. Faced by difficulties which appear insuperable, there must inevitably be this searching for a way out. The most extreme form of regressive solution to this problem of life is found in self-destruction; but short of this, alcohol, or resort to drugs, may appear to provide a temporary solution. The alcoholic has invariably got some psychological maladjustment which leads to this regressive attempt at escape. Either he is getting 'Dutch courage' instead of organizing his own understanding and facing his difficulties; or else he is wishing to sink into oblivion for the time being. The social problem of alcoholism will only be solved when it is realized that it is the result of an accumulation of individual problems, and that these are always based upon the difficulty felt by the individual in adjusting himself to his environment or to the demands of the society in which he lives. It is obvious that improvement in social conditions would remove a very large part of the temptation to alcoholic habits; and it is still more certain that an ideal psychological upbringing, if this could be achieved, would make the acute misery of these social inequalities impossible, and would

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ensure for the individual a positive method of attack on his difficulties.

In considering all these regressive tendencies that are common to the whole of humanity, we need to recognize, with an understanding and tolerant eye, that they are all, in effect, efforts to secure freedom for the individual; and, in so far as they are wrongly directed, it is the result of earlier circumstances and education in that individual. Neurosis, or nervous breakdown, which provides a method of retreat for so many people from their difficulties, has to be regarded always in this light. Quite often it will be obvious that through illness the individual receives a degree of that sympathy or protection for which he or she is longing. An example in point is the case of a man whose persistent dream was that he was being wheeled by his wife in a bath chair. This man had actually never been in a bath chair and was still doing his work, but his attitude towards his wife was one of constant dependence and of a perpetually childish searching for sympathy. Often, however, as the reader will have realized, it is much more difficult to lay bare the exact mechanism or the unconscious purpose of a neurosis.

Many of the difficulties of adult life centre round the question of marriage. This is not merely because it is usually the biggest and most adventurous step that we take in life, but because it involves moreover the whole question of our social relationships, of our understanding of sexuality, and it forces upon us responsibilities which are different from anything else we have come across. There is a vast and regrettable number

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of unhappy marriages, and these constitute a very serious challenge to the thinking man and woman. Obviously, people who are themselves badly adjusted enter with insufficient understanding into this relationship only to find that the demands for adaptation are such as they cannot satisfy. There is nothing wrong with marriage as an institution, but there is a great deal wrong with many of the individuals who get married. We have seen in an earlier chapter that the family relationships which the child faces at various stages may result in its emotional interest becoming unduly attached to its mother or in the case of the girl, to her father, and quite often these attachments persist and influence the feeling of the adult man or woman to such an extent that he or she marries the wrong person. A man may marry a mother substitute or someone who resembles his mother, while the girl, if she marries, may have in her mind some vague ideal which is based on her idea of her father but which is actually impossible of realization. More often, however, the difficulties of marriage result from an ignorance of its real nature. Some marry because it is the 'thing to do', others to get freedom from their home life and surroundings, and many do so simply because they are driven by sex desire. Marriage solves no problems, and the man or woman who hopes by taking this step that he or she will end many of the difficulties which they have as independent, single people, will almost inevitably be disappointed because, in reality, marriage is just a stage in our progress. If we, as individuals, have grown to that point in our adult life where we

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have developed our masculinity or our femininity to the right degree, we shall normally find ourselves making the hetero-sexual adjustment. It is when the individual's personality has grown to this stage that he or she becomes aware of the possibility of finding someone who is in complementary relationship, and, ideally, we should always wait until this stage is reached before we embark on marriage. The component parts of that love which leads to marriage are friendship and sexual attraction. By friendship is meant the spiritual relationship which ensures a reasonable similarity of outlook and community of interest; the same state of mind which ensures friendship of a close and intimate kind between people who are not married. It is essential that this shall be experienced between two people who marry, although quite often one finds that the romantic appeal of a winter sports' holiday or of some other short acquaintance has been allowed to blind people to the necessity of discovering such common ground. There are some folk who marry simply upon the basis of a spiritual relationship. This may be very close and very valuable, but, if it excludes or minimizes the biological side of the partnership, something will always be lacking, and marriage on that plane can never quite reach its highest development. Equally, a marriage which is made primarily upon a physical basis misses something of reality and solidity, and it is this latter type of relationship which is usually dissolved disastrously within a few years. We cannot, and should not, try to spiritualize away the animal in ourselves; we are so designed that both

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these aspects of our personality are meant to find expression, and in the ideal marriage there is a constant development of both these components. Marriages are not made in heaven, at least they are not ready-made; they can only be what we should like to see them if the man and woman both realize that marriage is a constant evolutionary process demanding adjustment and readjustment, experiment and sacrifice, day by day and year by year. A very large number of the troubles of marital life could be solved if only people were less afraid of criticizing themselves and accepting the difficulties which they experienced. The old idea that 'it will all come right' meant too often the postponement or evasion of real difficulties, which should be solved as soon as they arise. There is a great lack of frankness between husbands and wives, and a mistaken sense of loyalty which prevents people from ever taking advice from such of their own friends as may be competent to give it. We do not want to cut out any of the romance of marriage, but we have need to add to it some matter-of-fact, common-sense thinking. Marriage involves sacrifice on the part of both the man and the woman. The man has to give up a good deal of the independence and comfort which he might otherwise enjoy, but the woman gives up something that appears to be even greater.

The question of childbirth is often productive of emotional crises that seem difficult to understand. Much as she may long for children there will often be unconscious, and so unexpressed, rebellion against the sacrifice demanded, and many of the emotional

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and physical upsets, such as nausea and vomiting, which occur during pregnancy, may be due to this conflict in the woman's mind. The arrival of children in the family is also very liable to produce problems for both parents. There will often be difficulties such as have already been touched upon, the question of unwanted children, the dangers of parental oversolicitude and the difficulty of achieving that self-effacement which is so essential to the child's well-being. Parents may also experience considerable jealousy of their children. The husband who demands mothering from his wife may very easily experience jealousy when her maternal attention is deflected to her children, though he will not always recognize it. The ambitious woman may resent her daughter's rivalry in the affection of her husband. These difficulties may sound far-fetched, but they are surprisingly common in ordinary life, though perhaps they may be only vaguely recognized.

Middle age and old age have their own problems and make special demands upon us. The menopause or change of life, which is so evident because of its physiological changes in the woman, has its equivalent for the man also. There are certain glandular changes which come about in him, though in a more indefinite fashion and at a rather later age. For the man who has been absorbed in business, having perhaps given more of his interest, which is in effect his sexuality, to his business than he has to home life, the time of retirement presents many difficulties. New adjustments are needed, and his interests have to find fresh outlets, otherwise he is likely to

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become a self-centred and rather unhappy person. In the case of the woman, a great number of the difficulties which develop at this time of life are due to her own maladjustments. She has probably suffered from old wives' fables of the terrifying things which happen to women at the change of life and from the harrowing accounts of other people's experiences, related generally by those who wish to make a sensation, or gain sympathy for themselves. She often regards this time as the summit of her life, from which she is to go gradually downhill. It is quite true that it is a period at which her biological creative power comes to an end, but it is, in reality, only the end of one chapter and the beginning of another. Her creative interest has to go out along new and constructive lines. Backed by the experiences of her life, she has a capacity for interest and work which should still be widening rather than narrowing, and the appreciation of this fact is essential to her peace of mind. People who *get* old are, as a rule, rather tiresome. They have drifted into old age, suffering from some fatalistic sense that they are the victims of trying circumstances. Those who have appreciated the fact that the whole of life is evolutionary and that growth is essential to life, will *grow* old and thus be attractive, interesting and progressive people; they will be ready to accept new ideas or, even if they cannot agree with them, they will at least be willing to admit the possibility of truth and wisdom in these points of view. There will be a tolerance and a breadth of vision which springs from their wish to go on growing and from their belief in life and progress.

## *Chapter X*

# Sex Education

We have throughout this book been considering education, for education in the true sense of the word must always be primarily concerned with character growth rather than with the mere imparting of knowledge. The special aim of this chapter is the consideration of an aspect of development and education which is generally neglected because it concerns a subject of which many are afraid. The fear springs usually from ignorance, and indeed the majority of adults are ill-fitted to give reasonable sex instruction to children. It is for this reason that the subject is dealt with in a special chapter, but in actual practice sex education should go hand in hand with all sane and healthy evolutionary education. It should not receive special emphasis in the way that so often happens, but should fall naturally into its place in every stage of the child's development.

The creative or sex instinct is the most fundamental of all the instincts, and its effects are perhaps more far-reaching than those of any other. The man in the street often regards the function of sex in a very



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narrow light as being limited to those adult manifestations which lead up to marriage and procreation. In reality, however, the sexual instinct shows itself in a very great number of other ways which can be recognized, directly or indirectly, as justifying the word sexual. Nature has purposed the continuation of the race by means of this instinctive tendency, but there arises out of this design a vast number of other creative and social activities. It will be recalled that, in an earlier chapter, where the endocrine glands were under discussion, it was pointed out that the sex glands were responsible for all those secondary characteristics of manhood and womanhood which are so essential. The possession of a sexuality means for each one of us that we are not only capable of attracting the opposite sex and of experiencing passion, but it also means that we can feel enthusiasm, interest and love for other people, objects or causes. Without a sexual instinct we should be to a great extent incapable of achieving friendships, initiative or enthusiasm for anything; creative efforts in art and literature would be absent, and the team spirit which binds men and women together in groups would be deficient. The attitude towards sex of the average man and woman of the older generation has either been one of mystery and mild shame or else of libertine indulgence. There have been comparatively few people who were prepared to point out that the sexual instinct demanded our consideration and respect because of its fundamental importance. With its responsibility for love and life it would seem strange that men through their ig-

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norance have relegated this instinct to the background of their minds in so far as they were able, and have treated it as something unpleasant, almost degrading, save in certain recognized usages. Even in marriage, the Prayer Book would make it appear as something both dangerous and slightly revolting; yet the thinking man and woman cannot escape the fact that so powerful and important an instinct as this was meant for a better, healthier use, and only such a positive attitude towards sex can ever establish it in its right place in our scheme of values. Sex can be an extremely dangerous master, but we have no more valuable servant if once we are able to accept and appreciate it and so achieve an understanding control.

Hitherto the greatest difficulty in guiding the sex life of the individual and of society has lain in the lack of education. Most of the readers of this book had none except what they picked up at school from other children, who were, very likely, as ignorant as they themselves or else perhaps were quite incorrectly informed in matters of sex. All normal children will ask questions of their parents, and in the past they have too often been warned not to do so or else have been given misleading and incorrect stories, which have shaken their faith and sent them to undesirable quarters for the information which they rightly demanded. There has been, in fact, a great conspiracy of silence and of mystery, the very suggestion of which has stimulated the curiosity of children of both sexes to a thoroughly unhealthy degree. This has led not only to much ignorance but also to a great

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deal of unpleasant loose talk about sex; for all forbidden topics immediately become intriguing. It must certainly be true that a high percentage of the unhappy marriages and of the countless unhappy situations regarding the sex life which we find to-day have resulted from this gross ignorance of the subject.

It is important to establish the basic principle of correct sex education. Every child should have its questions with regard to sex answered. They should be answered absolutely truthfully in plain language, with the use of correct anatomical terms, and the child should be told exactly as much as it asks, and no more. The carrying out of this principle is, of course, certain to present a great number of difficulties, and the most fundamental of all is that the average parent does not know enough about the subject to be able to impart knowledge very easily or very naturally. Furthermore most people have a certain false modesty or shame, carried over from their own youth, resulting from the mistakes and fruitless explorations that they themselves have made, and this adds considerably to their difficulty in dealing with their children's queries. It is, therefore, a matter of great importance from the point of view of the mental health of the coming generation that every parent, or responsible person, should make themselves acquainted with the essential facts of sex in such a way that they can impart them clearly when necessity arises; and that they shall also attempt to understand and rid themselves of their own complexes or difficulties with regard to the subject.

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The education of children in these matters is neither the prerogative nor the duty of one parent only. Many mothers are willing when matters are explained to them to undertake to instruct their children as occasion arises, and in the early years, when the child's interest is naturally centred on his or her mother, it is right that she should do so. In the case of the girl, the mother will always be the proper person to whom the child should go for answers to her enquiries; but in the case of the boy, if he is past the eighth or ninth year, his father should play the rôle of educator in this respect. The average father tends to shirk his responsibilities rather badly, and there are few ways in which he can fail his son more seriously than by such an evasion. This book will have served some useful purpose if it calls attention to this opinion, which is not too strongly expressed, in the hope that more of the fathers of the coming generation may take their share of responsibility in dealing with so vital a matter. The usual practice in the past, where parents have been concerned for their children's sex education, has been to introduce them, somewhere about the age of puberty, to the essential facts of sex life by means of a rather solemn talk from one of their parents, or a pamphlet, usually very undesirable, or by a semi-religious address from the head of the preparatory school, or a clergyman in the course of their preparation for Confirmation. None of these methods is good. In the first place, before this age has been reached, unless the child is definitely backward mentally, it has already discovered, probably in an undesirable

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way, a good many of the facts of sex. The normal, intelligent child begins to ask simple questions as to how babies are born, and from where they come somewhere about the age of four, and these questions must be answered in the spirit that was suggested above. The child is not over-curious in asking about the processes of reproduction, it only demands a plain and truthful answer to its question, and we are merely evading, in fact being untruthful, when we give it the impression of some magical means of birth. Later on it will discover that it has been misled, or that these questions have been evaded, and its confidence in its parents will be shaken, at any rate in matters such as these. Some parents will say that their children never asked them questions until approximately the age of puberty. In such cases it will almost invariably be found, if the parents can search their recollections very honestly, that questions were asked at a much earlier stage but were either rebuffed or met with some form of prevarication.

The normal child will naturally be interested in children of the opposite sex with whom it bathes, or shares a bedroom, and this should all be treated quite naturally. It is not necessary to segregate the sexes until about the fifth or sixth year save in exceptional cases. Quite early in the child's life it will be possible to teach it that questions about matters such as these are rather important and should not be asked of all and sundry, but should be brought to the one informant, mother or father, as the case may be; and, if only true answers are given, no difficulty will be experi-

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enced in this way. Occasionally the child will, for reasons other than mental dullness, be backward in curiosity in matters of sex, and, if at eight or nine years of age no interest has been evinced, it is probably wise that the child should be encouraged to keep animals so that it may find interest in mating and birth, thus leading naturally and easily to the necessary instruction. By the time the child, of whichever sex, reaches the preparatory school age it should have received in answer to its questions the correct foundation of sexual instruction, so that any special séance of initiation is quite unnecessary. It is largely because of this idea of initiation that the imparting of a large number of facts at one time is very undesirable. We do not initiate children into the ordinary matters of social conduct, and, if we wish them to regard this important side of their lives as something natural and healthy, we must avoid this ceremonial instruction on the subject. At times, when something has gone wrong in the child's upbringing, where perhaps there have been no parents available, or for some other reason, and particularly where the father is not at hand to play his part in the boy's education, it may be essential that the schoolmaster, scoutmaster or doctor should be asked to lead up to the point of giving this instruction; but very great care should be taken to find the right person, who will do it in a natural and easy manner. The tendency to mingle religious instruction with sex instruction is a mistake, because it creates a false impression in the child's mind by suggesting that matters of sex are in some way especially under the Divine eye,

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and that they come into a category quite apart from the other physical or mental phenomena of its life. If religion means anything at all, then it must apply to every department of life and not especially to this one function; and much of the fear and misapprehension regarding sex phenomena has sprung from this well-meant mistake in education.

Sex instruction should not as a general rule be given to a group. Biological facts can, of course, in common with other school subjects be imparted in this way, but it is rarely wise to attempt to speak to a group of children at all intimately about specifically sexual matters, and perhaps still less wise to hint vaguely at them. The reason for this is that the emotional ages of children will vary so much. Of a dozen children aged fourteen there will probably not be two who are in reality at the same stage in their development and their knowledge of life. It is quite possible to talk to adults *en masse* about such topics, but if this method is applied to young children it is almost certain that we shall be forcing the pace for some and being merely ridiculous for others, the whole matter being so essentially an individual part of personal development.

At the same time it should be recorded that some interesting experiments in group sex education have been carried out in Welsh elementary schools with success (Tucker & Prout—*see Bibliography*).

This same reason may be advanced against the giving of books to children, of which a great many have been issued at various times, mostly of little worth. They either are so elementary and fairytale-

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like that the intelligent child smiles at them, or else they raise difficulties in the child's mind, that might not have occurred to him naturally at that period, and perhaps complicate, instead of simplifying, the subject for him. Only personal confidence in some adult whom he respects and trusts can really secure right instruction on what is one of the most important parts of the education of his character.

There are certain stages in the developing sex interest of the child which deserve a little more thought. There has been much use of the phrase 'infantile sexuality', which has been regarded by most people as a catchword of particular schools of psychology. The phrase seems grotesque, if by sexuality we only understand adult sex relations. There are, however, important processes going on in the mind of the very young child dependent upon its bodily sensory activities, and its relations to other people which are fundamentally sexual in nature. The development and outgoing of libido or interest (desire) from the earliest days of life is one of the most important aspects of the evolution of the personality. The sensory interest of the small baby centres very largely round the use of its mouth, and it derives pleasure, which has a certain erotic value, from sucking. This activity extends through the feeding process to thumb sucking, and, later on, to the sucking of all manner of other objects. We see this phase of erotic pleasure carried on into adult life in the chewing of sweets, sucking pencils, and in the frequent tendency that people have when they are self-pitying or regressive to revert to sucking



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their fingers or biting their nails. Kissing is in reality only a development of this sucking process, and it has been carried through into adult life and given an adult sexual value. The contact of the mucous membrane of the lips of two adult persons has a certain definite sexual value. There are other zones of the body from which the child derives considerable erotic pleasure. Its excretory functions often provide a focus around which much of its interest centres, and unwise handling or reproofs of its early interests may result in mild, or serious pathological conditions of mind later on. But this book is hardly the place to enter into what would be, of necessity, a lengthy description of these phenomena. Quite early in life, through the growth of the child's curiosity, there will be an exploration of its body, which will include the discovery of the genital area; and, at an early age, it may find that pleasure is to be derived from manipulation of its sexual organs. Masturbation—the manipulation of the genitalia—which produces erotic pleasure, will very often begin in the first year of life, and should be watched for in any child, but if it is noticed it needs indirect rather than direct treatment. Later on, as we shall see, the habit may need very direct handling; but in the early stages a diversion of the child's interest to other things, giving fresh occupations, as for example such that will demand the use of both hands while it is lying in bed, is the right method of approach to the difficulty. Any emphasis of the topic, or any proceeding which makes the child feel naughty, is to be absolutely avoided. The child has, at this stage, a definitely self-centred

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personality, and in a sense it is normal that selfish or self-loving activities of this sort should manifest themselves.

As it passes through the nursery and kindergarten stages the child will begin to ask questions and will display normal curiosity about the obvious differences in the sexes, and from six or seven years onward it is quite wise to begin biological education which, if not directly linked up to sexual functions, will provide the necessary background for the future understanding of these problems. With the approach of puberty the questions are likely to become more searching as there is a growing realization of the part which men and women play in the carrying on of the race. It is little short of a crime that any girl should be allowed to reach puberty without having had given to her a natural and healthy explanation of the coming menstrual phenomena. So many of the menstrual difficulties of later life derive in part from the feelings of fear, guilt or resentment which attach to her early ignorant experience. It is equally culpable to allow the boy to reach his first signs of sexual manhood without adequate understanding. . .

In dealing with the questions of the child who is nearing adolescence there is a limit to which the botanical parallel is useful. Behind the whole mechanism of sex life there is a quite definite factor of pleasure which nature has arranged as part of its scheme to draw men and women together for procreative purposes. There is no reason why we should be ashamed of this, and every reason why we should be prepared to point out to the child that it is so,

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for he or she is certainly going to experience this pleasure. The child can appreciate the argument that though certain pleasures may be taken from life at an early stage, it is wise and practical to postpone such indulgences till such time as the fullest and best use can be made of this function in maturity.

It is about the age of puberty that the problem of masturbation is most acute for the average child. Given healthy instruction a great deal of the temptation to explore and pluck unripe fruit for itself would have gone; but, as it is, there are very few boys or men who at some time or other have not been worried by this habit, and this is true of approximately fifty per cent of girls or women. All sorts of methods have been used to check the habit, which people have realized, quite rightly, to be undesirable. Punishment, religious influences, alternative interests and many other lines of attack have been taken but with limited success. As a rule they only succeed in bringing about a suppression or repression of the habit and fail to touch the real root of the trouble. An almost infinite amount of harm has been done to children by adding to their early guilt sense about their interest in these mysteries through unwise pamphlets or books, which have spread, and still continue to spread, mistaken legends of the harm and danger of the habit. Every kind of disease, physical and mental, has at some time or other been ascribed to the habit of masturbation, and this by well-meaning people who believed what they had been told and whose desire was to frighten the child out of such practices. The result has been disastrous,

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because thousands of men and women have been driven through this fear and guilt sense into nervous breakdown, and even into insanity. Actually there is no truth in these strangely persistent rumours. Masturbation *per se* produces no permanent harm of any kind. The mischief that it does is primarily through the mental conflict that it raises in the mind of the person who indulges. The conflict is between, on the one hand, the pleasure experienced, and, on the other hand, the vague sense that it is wrong, which has sprung from early taboos and prohibitions, and which has been intensified by lectures, books, or the stories of other children. There is no satisfactory way of treating the child who suffers from this except that of treating the personality as a whole. We cannot isolate this one manifestation of the turning in to himself of his interest; we can only explain and alter it if we see what is going wrong in his development as an individual. The persistent childish, self-loving, self-indulgent personality is present in us all. The degree to which it shows itself depends primarily upon the environment and circumstances of our early life and the way in which we have reacted to them. Even in adult life we retain this self-indulgent, auto-erotic tendency, and all through life it may manifest itself through any part of our being. It may emerge as ordinary social selfishness or perhaps as self-importance, conceit or self-pity. It will come out in some people through their religious instinct, and their religion will in this case be of the nature of a fire insurance. Those who are primarily saving their own souls and insuring their own future comfort

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are finding an expression for their own selfishness rather than a true expression of any idealistic Christian faith. It will also show itself through our sex life, and consequently lead to auto-erotic practices such as masturbation, or in later life, to promiscuity; and may, when carried on into married life, still persist and spoil the real unselfish relationship that should exist between a man and his wife.

The child can quite easily understand that selfishness is undesirable in itself and in others, and we shall have no difficulty in showing it that all selfishness or self-indulgence is regressive, and conduces to a failure in social adjustment. The persistence of any of these expressions of self-love will mean a short-circuit of the personality. It is along this line that we need to help the child with his problem, for, unless we can assist him to understand and give him greater scope for activities of a wiser kind, we shall never help him to grow away from his tendency to love himself too much and to indulge his inclinations unwisely. With the oncoming of puberty there must come about a more definite degree of differentiation between the sexes, which will be felt in the family life and must extend to friendships outside the family. Modesty used to be regarded as a rather negative virtue, hiding away something which was slightly shameful or indecent. If we have managed to give children a definite and positive conception of the importance of their sexuality, we shall have no difficulty whatever with questions of modesty, because anything so valuable and wonderful as this potentiality in themselves must, of necessity, be

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treasured. It is important at this stage, too, that children should realize that the sexes are not comparable, but complementary. We shall have difficulty of course in conveying this idea to children in any real way if we ourselves still cling to that belief which has been so carefully organized through the ages, of the superiority of man and the inferiority of the 'weaker sex'. We need to think out these questions very honestly for ourselves if we are to help the boys and girls of this generation to grow up to a wiser and more tolerant outlook on these questions in the future. The different standards that are supposed to exist for men and women in moral questions have come from these misconceptions, and much of the unhappy rivalry that can be seen to-day could have been avoided by providing the child with a proper set of values.

The adolescent stage is, for both the boy and the girl, one in which their interest is primarily homosexual, and there will often be considerable difficulty in consequence. It is quite right, and quite normal that interest and friendship should be expressed towards other members of our own sex; but if there is, added to this, a persistent, self-indulgent tendency and an ignorance of sexual values, unhealthy friendships may result which will be maudlin and sentimental and may go on, in some cases, to actual physical practices which are undesirable in themselves and likely to be hampering for the future. Much care is needed in the handling of these wrong relationships. The schoolmistress who finds that a girl has a 'crush' or 'rave' has need for much insight and

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a great deal of patience, if she is to do the best thing possible for the girl concerned. To turn down or repulse the affection which is displayed is no solution of the problem. Something very good and splendid, but quite immature, is finding an outlet in this phase, and it needs to be met with respect and, by a gradual and sometimes rather trying process, developed into an ordinary and non-sentimental friendship. The child has to be shown that, while the mistress can respect this friendship, and is prepared to give real friendship in exchange, in so far as it is sexual and an expression of growing womanhood, it is something to be kept for a later period, for a better and bigger use. In the case of the boy, the problem will not emerge in quite the same way as a rule; but, when it does, it needs similar handling. More often it shows itself in undesirable friendships and intimacies between boys of a similar age, and it may sometimes lead to episodes with smaller boys which necessitate disciplinary action on the part of the schoolmaster. The community has certainly to be protected from anti-social action, but the boys concerned need help and treatment and should never be given a sense that what they are doing is anything more than making a wrong use of their sexuality from misapprehension, in fact, that their trouble is an illness, not a sin.

In dealing with these difficulties in children, or in those who are older, the most important point to which we need to educate them is the realization that sex, to be properly used, must always be creative. If it cannot be creative of babies or of real passion

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and enthusiasm, it should be devoted to the creation of character and man- or womanhood. The homosexual expression is of necessity to a large extent a blind alley, and, while relatively harmless in the majority of cases, must always mean a slight diminution of efficiency, and the chance of progress. This is true even for the woman who has emerged from girlhood and finds her chance of marriage negligible.

Our education in sex is a process which is not confined to childhood, it goes on for all of us throughout life. In marriage, and throughout married life, there is a constant need for watchfulness, exploration and thought. Most of the unhappy marriages, of which there are such an appalling number to-day, are the result of ignorance and lack of understanding. In the last chapter we have spoken of some of the difficulties of married life; and it will be evident from what has been said here that the same self-indulgent tendency which we see in childhood may be carried forward into married life. Limitation of families would have no dangerous significance if we could exclude selfishness on the part of both parents. There would be no difficulties in the intimate sexual life of marriage, such as impotence, or dyspareunia (painful intercourse), if there had been proper sex knowledge and understanding antecedent to marriage; and the majority of these conditions, which though not very important in themselves, yet tend, by constant repetition, to undermine the happiness and progress of the marital relationship, can be relieved or removed by psychotherapeutic help.

It may be Utopian to look forward to a state in



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which none of these situations shall arise; but yet we should do so, and the first and most important step towards the attainment of that goal is that we shall insist, for our own children, and for all others as well, upon adequate, rational, true, sex knowledge, given at the right time and in the right way. If we are to take our part in this work, we have need first of all to start with ourselves, to realize and attack our own difficulties and our complexes on the subject, and to give more than lip service to the idea of the value and the cleanness of sexuality and sex interest. Unless we do this, we shall have but a poor and unconvincing contribution to make to the solution of what is, perhaps, the greatest social problem of to-day.

## *Chapter XI*

# The Art of Adjustment

Those who have followed the book up to this point, will realize that its outstanding idea is concerned with the growth of the individual. Life is so varied that it demands constant change in each one of us, and, unless we are able to widen our outlook, to take in new points of view, and to make progress, we shall of necessity fail to fit into life. The goal of the child is often hampered by unwise or irrational restrictions which are put upon it, usually with the best intentions in the world. Circumstances create a barrier to our progress, and, because we do not realize that there are ways around circumstances, we may very often stay where we are. To a lesser or greater extent we are all of us square pegs in round holes, and it is only as we get insight into ourselves and see how we may adapt and adjust ourselves to life that we can fit into the round hole and get that ease of mind, that mental health, for which we wish.

Many people assume that they are too old to change their points of view. They feel that if, when they were children or perhaps on the verge of adult life, they had known what they do now, big

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things might have happened. We all have a tendency to avoid the difficulty and effort that are involved in making readjustments in our own life. There are, however, few things more worth having than this art of adjustment. We cannot have it unless we have a reasonable degree of honesty, some small critical ability, and a sense of humour. If we have these, and we are willing to learn and to think and quite humbly to apply what we learn to ourselves, there is no one who cannot make satisfactory alterations in outlook which will result in increased efficiency and happiness.

In nature there is always a considerable process of change going on. In the course of every few years we shed or absorb every single tissue of our body, and there is no bit of our physical being left which was there some years before. Old cells have died and new ones have been created. In the mental sphere we are too often willing to hold on to old ideas, which were perhaps presented to us by other people or created by ourselves; at one time they suited us, they were safe, they were respectable; and we find ourselves unwilling to change and go out in search of new, and possibly broader, ideas. The shoes that we wore when we were children do not fit us as adults, nor does the mental footwear of our childhood serve any except a cramping function in the adult personality. Tradition is extremely useful in many ways. There are very few traditions with which we shall not agree, in part at any rate, if we examine them for ourselves, but the danger of tradition lies in the fact that it so often keeps us infantile.

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We accept ready-made standards to save ourselves from thinking, and, although we say we know or we believe such and such a thing, we have in fact not put a sufficient amount of mental effort into the matter to have achieved any sort of view-point that is our own. Just as the cells of the body die and fresh ones are born, so in our mental life we may constantly come across this theme of death and rebirth. There are certain special times at which, possibly in dreams, we shall be conscious of such changes taking place. In the woman's life the phases of puberty, marriage and the menopause are outstanding times at which this process is very obvious. They are all situations in which the old method of life and thought has got to fade. Irresponsible childhood has to give place to the awakening sense of adult womanhood with its responsibilities; independent womanhood has, at marriage, to give place to the greater responsibilities and the sacrifices of the conjugal and maternal life, while at the change of life, the Libido, or creative force, has need to be put out in new ways, and a fresh chapter of life has to be started. At these critical times, it is very frequently found that there are dreams which are quite unmistakably symbolic of death and rebirth. In the man's life also, at times which are less obviously critical, we become aware of this same theme. Those who are consciously setting out to adjust themselves where it is necessary will often have such dreams or phantasies, and, in a very curious way, they may use the actual symbols of physical birth. A patient, whose serious breakdown had lasted for some three years, was intensely self-

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centred and regressive. He had never escaped from the mother-dependent phase, had married a mother substitute, and his whole life was an attempt to evade difficulties and responsibilities. When he came under treatment all his interest was absorbed in his own physical symptoms, and his own inability to live a normal existence. He had, during the course of treatment, a dream which shows very clearly the process that was taking place in his mind, the conflict between the regressive pull back to invalidism and the forward pull to adventure and real life. He dreamt that he was on a Viking ship in an enclosed harbour (he drew this enclosed harbour, which was a particular one he knew, in what was approximately the form of the uterus). His wife was on the ship, and was urging him to go out to sea, but he failed to take this suggestion. The crew of the ship urged him to stay in the harbour, for, they said: 'It is much more comfortable here'; and again he was undecided and did nothing. The crew represented his feelings which influenced him unduly. His associations in this particular harbour town were (a) I was born there; (b) they are all invalids in that town, so that here was the suggestion of the safety of remaining in the infantile relationship to life, which was also synonymous for him with invalidism. The patient's associations in this dream made it clear that his wife was standing there as a symbol of the progressive challenge. The Viking ship was obviously the symbol of adventurous life. He was being challenged to launch out to adventure and risk, to the discovery of new lands and to a life that, though anything but safe, is certainly

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rewarding. This launching out was, in fact, a rebirth; and the dream, with its curious anatomical parallel (the regression to the mother's womb), which we do not need to stress at all unduly, is very typical of many of the dreams that occur. In this particular case, the man, seeing the meaning of the dream, and realizing his conflict more clearly, was able to take active steps, with the result that the next night he had a progressive dream indicating a real move in himself, and from that time on, he made progress.

The art of adjustment is to some extent dependent on our willingness to be reborn, a phraseology suggestive of theological doctrines which, in the light of modern psychological experience, has added meaning. To readjust ourselves involves effort and adventure, which is both unsafe and difficult; and it is for this reason that so often we proclaim ourselves unable to bring about changes which our reason tells us are necessary. The demand for sacrifice will inevitably have to be faced if we are to achieve our freedom. In every philosophy of life this principle emerges, and in the life of the individual we are constantly faced by the need for giving up some of the things which we value most. Often we are so loaded up and puffed out with self-esteem that we cannot go through the needle's eye.

Many people who in childhood have felt themselves deprived of certain things which were their rights, or which they thought to be so, will go through life unconsciously struggling all the time to get back from others this love, or approval, or whatever it may be, to which they felt entitled. We have always

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to choose between our rights and our freedom; we cannot have both. The persistence of our struggle to wrest these rights from life means of itself that our interest is absorbed and that we are slavishly compelled by these desires.

The child is making a constant struggle towards freedom, and the wisdom or unwisdom of its efforts will depend upon the way in which we handle it, and the circumstances in which it finds itself. Throughout the early years many difficult adjustments are demanded, and whether the child learns to be adaptable depends largely upon the help we give it and the ideals we set before it. The problems of the adolescent are somewhat larger and demand a greater sense of personal responsibility from the individual. In adult life the emphasis is on individual development, and the adjustment of environment is a very secondary matter. If we cannot learn this lesson of adaptation we shall be driven of necessity into intellectual dishonesties with ourselves, and into maladjustments which will show themselves in defects of conduct or character, or we may end in neurosis or a more serious mental breakdown.

There are three main lines along which adjustment is needed, towards ourselves, towards society, and towards the Infinite. Adjustment to oneself will always be difficult, where we have been given the impression that we are unduly valuable or precious. We are reluctant to give up our belief in our own importance, even if we recognize intellectually that it is irrational or untrue. Very many of the fundamental difficulties of life result from our failures to

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reconstruct our feelings on this point. The social adjustment, which includes our relationship to all our friends, to marriage and to the larger society outside, is dependent to some extent on the attitude which we have to ourselves, but also is hampered by the wrong thinking about the herd and by the faulty judgments of others which have taken place in earlier stages of our life. Adjustment to the Infinite is a matter which everyone will have to express for him or herself in their own way. There is something in everyone which demands an explanation or philosophy of life which goes deeper and further than anything we have yet said in this book. Science can only go a certain way; there is always something that lies beyond what we know as fact. It is evident to the medical psychologist that a self-centred person whose interest is turned pathologically upon himself can only get well and has only got the inducement to do so if there is something in life that is more worth loving than himself. That is to say, we must have ideals, and these ideals must be the highest that we can find. It may be true that, in our attempts to get nearer to perfection, through understanding more of our minds, and through better touch with what we have called the unconscious, we are in fact getting into closer touch with spiritual factors.

It is not only those patients who have a background of orthodox religion who have dreams which seem to point in this direction. Many of the dreams of the former type of person, which may perhaps be explained as wish-fulfilments, will resemble those phenomena which have been called the mystic



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vision. An instance of this occurred in an elderly clergyman who was obsessed with the idea that he had committed the unforgivable sin. No argument or logic could get rid of this idea. He had a dream that he was in a darkened room, with green venetian blinds drawn down over the window; and, sitting in a chair with his back to the window, was a friend of his of whom he said, in speaking of the dream, that he was the saintliest man he had ever known. The patient, in the dream, went up to the old man and handed him a red rose. The old man took it, and as he did so the patient started back because he suddenly noticed for the first time that there was a big piece of it eaten out by slugs, and he thought, 'Ah, now the old man will throw it away.' He, however, took it and looked at it carefully. He examined the whole flower, including the slug-eaten part, then he smelt it and said: 'This rose smells very sweet; you can pull up the blinds now.' The patient pulled up the blinds and the sun streamed in. That dream is so obvious that it hardly needs interpretation. The slug-eaten part was obviously the symbolic representation of those minor upsets in his life which he had been unable to reconcile with his idea of himself as a Christian. The saintliest man he had ever known was probably a symbol of God.

To illustrate the other aspect, a man who had no definite religious background and no conscious religious philosophy of his own although he was a very shrewd and able man, lost his wife, and her death brought about a breakdown and emotional upset of considerable severity. A dream which

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brought much enlightenment to him was as follows: He was looking for his wife, but found that she had gone off with Lord——. He did not know who he was, but was inordinately jealous of her having gone off with this man. Then the dream changed, and he was speaking on the telephone and found that he could get through to this Lord ——, but he found that there was no other name; he was merely called 'Lord'. In talking to him he realized that, as he put it, he was a very good fellow and a gentleman, and that his wife was perfectly all right. He could not speak to her, but realized that she was there and perfectly happy. He seemed to have television, and could see that this Lord had a very fine estate. He felt much more peaceful in his mind as the result of this dream. Here, although the man himself had no religious background, there is an obvious introduction of certain conventional phrases and ideas. The dream seems, however, to go rather further than this, and it is at any rate permissible to surmise that it was getting at what was, for him, real and vital truth. He himself in speaking of it, without any suggestion from the analyst, said that he supposed the telephone idea must stand as the symbol of what people meant when they talked of Faith.

Whatever our own attitude may be to specifically religious matters, there is no question but that we need some philosophy of life which is progressively satisfying to us. A better acquaintance with our own mind will inevitably help towards adjustment and mental health. Self-control plays an important part but not quite in the rôle that has been so often as-

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signed to it. Many people are greatly concerned with the attainment of self-control. They are always taking hold of themselves and driving themselves across impossibly difficult mental morasses, forcing their minds into quite absurd situations, that in the long run produce unrest and disharmony rather than peace. There is a line of Tennyson's which runs: 'self-reverence, self-knowledge, self-control,' and there can be no better arrangement of these three principles. Self-reverence does not mean self adulation, and our self-esteem will certainly receive many shrewd blows when we begin to be critical. Our self-respect, however, will not suffer, for, even when we have gone very far astray in our search for freedom, the personality still deserves to be respected. Circumstances that warped our antecedent understanding and led to unwise and faulty reactions, demand investigation but do not merit self-blame. Failure in conscious effort is the only justification for this. Self-depreciation is always false and blinds us to criticism, but, if we are able to see that while criticizing the things we do we should still reverence the doer and his potentialities, we shall push on with our quest for self-knowledge.

There can be nothing in our past or in our mental life that we should fear to look at. To ignore those things which need alteration or revaluation is a foolish and short-sighted method. Self-knowledge is essential if we would have progress for ourselves and for society.

It is from this attitude of self-reverence with its clear-eyed search for knowledge that real self-control

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can emerge. The positive feeling towards life will lead us to fuller, wiser and more disciplined self-expression, and it is only this free and positive control of ourselves that is truly valuable and in accord with the laws of mental health.

## BOOKS SUGGESTED FOR FURTHER READING

- Coster, Geraldine. *Psycho-Analysis for Normal People*.  
Oxford University Press.
- Crichton-Miller, H. *The New Psychology and the Teacher*.  
Jarrolds.
- Erleigh, Viscountess. *The Mind of the Growing Child*.  
Faber and Gwyer.
- Hadfield, J. A. *Psychology and Morals*. Methuen.
- Hart, Bernard. *The Psychology of Insanity*. Cambridge  
University Press.
- Howden, R.A. *The Mind in Conflict*. Oxford Uni-  
versity Press.
- Mental Hygiene*. Published quarterly by the National  
Council for Mental Hygiene, London.

## MORE ADVANCED READING

- Crichton-Miller, H. *Psycho-Analysis and its Derivatives*.  
Thornton Butterworth, Ltd.
- Gordon, R. G. *The Neurotic Personality*. Kegan Paul.
- Gordon, R.G., Harris, N.G., and Rees, J.R.  
*An Introduction to Psychological Medicine*. Oxford  
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- Jones, Ernest. *Psycho-Analysis*. Benn's 6d. Series.  
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- McDougall, W. *Social Psychology and Outline of Abnormal Psychology*. Methuen.
- Ross, T. A. *The Common Neuroses*. E. Arnold.  
*Mental Hygiene*. Published quarterly by the National  
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- Various Authors. *Psychology and Modern Problems*.  
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- Burt, Cyril. *The Young Delinquent*. University of  
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- Gordon, R. G. *Autolycus, or the Future for Miscreant  
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- Hutchison, Alice. *The Child and His Problems*. Williams  
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- Herbert, S. *Physiology and Psychology of Sex*. A. & C.  
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